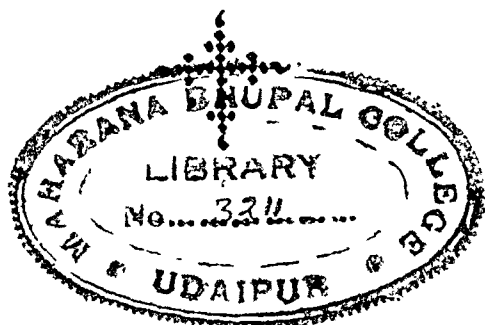


A
DRAMATIC READER
BOOK II

A. R. Headland

&

H. A. Treble



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE	5
(FROM <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> —JANE AUSTEN.)	
2. FOREST HOSPITALITY	10
(FROM <i>Maid Marian</i> —T. L. PEACOCK.)	
3. TROUBLED TIMES IN SCOTLAND	16
(FROM <i>Old Mortality</i> —SIR WALTER SCOTT.)	
4. A FAITHFUL JESTER	30
(FROM <i>Ivanhoe</i> —SIR WALTER SCOTT.)	
5. AN EASTERN SCENE	34
(FROM <i>The Talisman</i> —SIR WALTER SCOTT.)	
6. A FORTUNATE ESCAPE	42
(FROM <i>Ernest Maltravers</i> —E. BULWER LYTTON.)	
7. MR. PICKWICK ENGAGES A SERVANT	48
(FROM <i>The Pickwick Papers</i> —CHARLES DICKENS.)	
8. AN UNFORTUNATE CHALLENGE	52
(FROM <i>Nicholas Nickleby</i> —CHARLES DICKENS.)	
9. BAITING A SCHOOLMASTER	57
(FROM <i>David Copperfield</i> —CHARLES DICKENS.)	
10. MISS PINKERTON'S ACADEMY	62
(FROM <i>Vanity Fair</i> —W. M. THACKERAY.)	
11. A TRIANGULAR DUEL	72
(FROM <i>Mr. Midshipman Easy</i> —CAPTAIN MARRYAT.)	
12. CRANFORD SOCIETY	78
(FROM <i>Cranford</i> —MRS. GASKELL.)	
13. HANDY ANDY	89
(FROM <i>Handy Andy</i> —SAMUEL LOVER.)	
14. DISCOMFORTING A DANDY	92
(FROM <i>Handy Andy</i> —SAMUEL LOVER.)	
15. A FAMILY DISCUSSION	100
(FROM <i>The Mill on the Floss</i> —'GEORGE ELIOT'.)	
16. A MISER'S LOSS	105
(FROM <i>Silas Marner</i> —'GEORGE ELIOT'.)	

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE

CHARACTERS

MR. BENNET

MRS. BENNET

ELIZABETH BENNET } (*daughters of Mr. and*

KITTY BENNET } *Mrs. Bennet*)

REV. MR. COLLINS

SCENE I

A sitting-room in MR. BENNET'S house at Longbourn.—

MRS. BENNET, ELIZABETH, and KITTY seated at work.

Enter MR. COLLINS.

MR. COLLINS. May I hope, madam, for your interest with your fair daughter, Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience with her in the course of the morning?

MRS. BENNET. Oh dear! Yes, certainly. I am sure Lizzy will be very happy; I am sure she can have no objection. Come, Kitty, I want you upstairs. (*She rises to go.*)

ELIZABETH. Dear madam, do not go; I beg you will not go! Mr. Collins must excuse me. He can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I am going away myself.

MRS. BENNET. No, no; nonsense, Lizzy; I desire you will stay where you are. (*Elizabeth moves as if to go.*) Lizzy, I insist upon your staying and hearing Mr. Collins.

ELIZABETH. (*Aside.*) I should be wiser to get it over as soon as possible. (*She sits down again. Exit Mrs. Bennet and Kitty.*)

MR. COLLINS. Believe me, dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds

to your other perfections You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there not been this little unwillingness but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject—

ELIZABETH (*Aside*) Run away with by his feelings! With such solemn composure as he has! (*She hides her face in her hand & sighs*)

MR COLLINS I shall state my reasons for marrying First I think it right for every clergyman to set the example of matrimony in his parish secondly I am convinced it will add greatly to my happiness Thirdly, it is the particular advice of the noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness This much for my general intention in favour of matrimony My views were directed to Longbourn by the fact that being as I am to inherit the estate after the death of your honoured father I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters that the loss to them might be as little as possible This has been my motive my fair cousin and now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affections Though that thousand pounds in the four per cents is all you may ever be entitled to you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married

ELIZABETH (*Interrupting*) You are too hasty sir, you forget that I have made no answer Let me do so without further loss of time Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them

MR. COLLINS. I am not now to learn that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept. I am, therefore, by no means discouraged by what you have said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long.

ELIZABETH. Upon my word, sir, your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make me happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world to make you happy. Nay, your friend, Lady Catherine, would find me ill-qualified for the situation.

MR. COLLINS. Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so—but I cannot imagine it—you may be certain that I shall speak in the highest terms of——

ELIZABETH. Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family. (*Rising.*) This matter may, therefore, be considered as finally settled.

MR. COLLINS. When I do myself the honour of speaking to you next on the subject, I shall hope to receive a more favourable answer than you have now given me.

ELIZABETH. (*Rapidly.*) Really, Mr. Collins, you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said encourages you, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one.

MR. COLLINS. You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely words, of course. My reasons for believing it are chiefly that in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made to you. I shall choose, therefore, to attribute it to your

wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females

ELIZABETH I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretensions whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere I thank you again for the honour you have done me, but to accept your proposals is absolutely impossible My feelings in every respect forbid it Can I speak plainer?

MR COLLINS You are uniformly charming! and I am persuaded that, when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable. (*Exit Elizabeth*)

(*Enter Mrs Bennet in a hurry*)

MRS BENNET Mr Collins my dear Mr Collins I do congratulate you—and ourselves too for that matter, on the happy prospect of our being more closely related

MR COLLINS I am delighted that it meets with your approval At present I am bound to say that my cousin, to attract me more, has repulsed my advances I trust I have every reason to be satisfied with the result however, since the refusal my cousin has given would naturally flow from her bashful modesty

MRS BENNET That is not like Lizzie, Mr Collins, but depend upon it, she shall be brought to reason I will speak to her about it directly She is a very headstrong foolish girl, and does not know her own interests, but I will make her know it

MR COLLINS Pardon me for interrupting you, madam; but if she is really headstrong and foolish I know not whether she would altogether be a very desirable wife to a man in my situation who naturally looks for—

MRS BENNET Sir, you quite misunderstand me, Lizzy

is only headstrong in such matters as these ; in everything else she is as good-natured a girl as ever lived. (*Rises.*) I will go directly to Mr. Bennet, and we will very soon settle it with her, I am sure. (*Enter Mr. Bennet.*) Oh, here is Mr. Bennet—Mr. Bennet !

MR. COLLINS. If you will allow me, madam, I will leave you. (*Bows and exit.*)

MRS. BENNET. O Mr. Bennet, you are wanted immediately. You must come and make Lizzie marry Mr. Collins ; for she vows she will not have him, and if you do not make haste he will change his mind, and not have her.

MR. BENNET. I have not the pleasure of understanding you. Of what are you talking ?

MRS. BENNET. Of Mr. Collins and Lizzy ; Lizzy declares she will not have Mr. Collins, and Mr. Collins begins to say that he will not have Lizzy.

MR. BENNET. And what am I to do on the occasion ? It seems a hopeless business.

MRS. BENNET. Speak to Lizzy about it yourself. Tell her you insist upon her marrying him.

MR. BENNET. Let her be called down. She shall hear my opinion. (*Mrs. Bennet rings the bell. Enter servant.*) Send Miss Elizabeth to me. (*Exit servant.* Mr. Bennet *drums on the table with his fingers.* *Enter Elizabeth.*)

MR. BENNET. Come here, child. I have sent for you on an affair of importance. I understand that Mr. Collins has made you an offer of marriage. Is it true ?

ELIZABETH. It is, sir.

MR. BENNET. Very well. And this offer of marriage you have refused ?

ELIZABETH. I have, sir.

MR. BENNET. Very well ; we now come to the point. Your mother insists upon your accepting it. Is it not so, Mrs. Bennet ?

MRS. BENNET. Yes, or I will never see her again.

MR BENNET An unhappy alternative is before you Elizabeth From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents Your mother will never see you again if you do not marry Mr Collins and I will never see you again if you do! (*Elizabeth laughs Mrs Bennet falls to the floor and faints*)

CURTAIN

FOREST HOSPITALITY

CHARACTERS

MAID MARIAN

KNIGHT (*KING RICHARD III d s*
g w se)

FRIAR TUCK

ROBIN HOOD

LITTLE JOHN

SCARLET

MONK

SIR WILLIAM

SCENE

A glade in Sherwood Forest Nottingham MAID MARIAN
in the dress of a young forester is leaning against a tree Enter a KNIGHT on horseback

MARIAN In God's name Sir Knight you are late to your meals My master has tarried dinner for thee these three hours

KNIGHT I doubt I am not he you wot of I am nowhere bidden to day and I know none in this neighbourhood

MARIAN We feared your memory would be treacherous therefore am I stationed here to refresh it

KNIGHT Who is your master and where does he abide?

MARIAN My master is called Robin Hood and he abides hard by

KNIGHT And what knows he of me?

MARIAN He knows you as he knows every wayfaring knight and friar by instinct

KNIGHT. Gramercy, then I understand his bidding. But how if I say I will not come ?

MARIAN. I am enjoined to bring you. If persuasion avail not, I must use other argument.

KNIGHT. Say'st thou so ? I doubt if thy stripling rhetoric would convince me.

MARIAN. That we will see.

KNIGHT. We are not equally matched, boy. I should get less honour by thy conquest than grief by thy injury.

MARIAN. Perhaps my strength is more than my seeming, and my cunning more than my strength. Therefore let it please your knighthood to dismount.

KNIGHT. (*Springing from his saddle.*) It shall please my knighthood to chastise thy presumption.

(*They draw and fight for a few minutes, with slight damage to Marian's jerkin and to the Knight's plume.*)

A VOICE (*from the thicket*). Well fought, girl ; well fought. Mass, that had nigh been a shrewd hit. Thou owest him for that, lass. Marry, stand by, I'll pay him for thee.

(*Enter a tall Friar, brandishing a huge cudgel.*)

KNIGHT. Who art thou ?

FRIAR. I am the church militant of Sherwood. Why art thou in arms against our lady queen ?

KNIGHT. What meanest thou ?

FRIAR. Truly, this is our liege lady of the forest, against whom I do apprehend thee in act of treason. What sayest thou for thyself ?

KNIGHT. I say that if this be indeed a lady, man never yet held me so long.

FRIAR. Spoken like one who hath done execution. (*Brandishes his cudgel.*) Wilt thou fight ? or wilt thou dine ? or wilt thou fight and dine ? or wilt thou dine and fight ? I am for thee, choose as thou mayest.

KNIGHT. I will dine ; for with lady I never fought before,

and with that I never fought yet, and with neither will I ever fight knowingly. If this be the queen of the forest, I will not, being in her own dominions, be backward to do her homage. (*Kisses her hand*)

FRIAR GRAMERCY, Sir Knight, I laud thee for thy courtesy, which I deem to be no less than thy valour. Now do thou follow me, while I follow my nose, which scents the pleasant odour of roast from the depth of the forest recesses. I will lead thy horse, and do thou lead my lady. (*Exeunt, the Friar leading and singing*)

When the wind blows, when the wind blows
 I roam where under buck the dry log glows,
 What guide can you follow
 O'er brake and o'er hollow,
 So true as a ghostly, ghostly nose?

The scene changes to the august presence of ROBIN HOOD and his court. Under a high canopy of living boughs, a board is covered with choice food and liquor. A hundred foresters are assembled for dinner. Enter the FRIAR, the KNIGHT and MAID MARIAN.

ROBIN Welcome Sir Knight

(*The Knight takes his seat between Robin and Marian. Between Little John and Scarlet is seated a Monk, weeping.*)

ROBIN (*To Monk*) Why dost thou weep, man? Thou hast done thine embassy justly, and shalt have thy Lady's grace.

MONK Alack! alack! no embassy had I, as well thou knowest but to take to my abbey in safety the treasure whereof thou hast despoiled me.

FRIAR TUCK Propound me his case and I will give him ghostly counsel.

ROBIN You well remember the sorrowful knight who dined with us here twelve months and a day gone by?

FRIAR TUCK. Well do I. His lands were in danger with a certain abbot, who would allow no longer day for their redemption. You lent him the four hundred pounds which he needed, and which he was to repay this day.

ROBIN. And here this faithful monk hath brought it me duly, principal and interest to a penny, as Little John can testify, who counted it. To be sure, he denied having it, but that was to prove our faith. We sought and found it.

MONK. I know nothing of your knight, and the money was our own.

(Little John brings the wailing Monk his horse, and Robin bids him depart. The Knight laughs heartily as the Monk rides off.)

FRIAR TUCK. They say, Sir Knight, they should laugh who win : but thou laughest who art likely to lose.

KNIGHT. I have won a good dinner, some mirth, and some knowledge : and I cannot lose by paying for them.

ROBIN. Bravely said. Still it becomes thee to pay : for it is not meet that a poor forester should treat a rich knight. How much money hast thou with thee ?

KNIGHT. Troth, I know not. Sometimes much, sometimes little, sometimes none. But search, and what thou findest, keep : and for the sake of thy kind heart and open hand, be it what it may, I shall wish it were more.

ROBIN. Then, since thou sayest so, not a penny will I touch. Many a false churl comes hither, and disburses against his will : and till there is lack of these, I prey not on true men.

KNIGHT. Thou art thyself a true man, right well I judge, Robin, and seemest more like one bred in court than to thy present outlaw life.

FRIAR. Our life is a craft, an art, and a mystery. How much of it, think you, could be learned at court ?

KNIGHT. Indeed, I cannot say ; but I should apprehend very little.

FRIAR And so should I Yet we all love and honour King Richard, and here is a deep draught to his health. Our virtues are truly akin to those of Cœur de Lion. Richard is courteous, bountiful, honest, and valiant, and so also is Robin They are twin spirits and should be friends but that fortune hath differently cast their lot

MARIAN And you may add I friar, that Robin no less than Richard is king in his own dominion, and that if his subjects be fewer, yet are they more uniformly loyal

KNIGHT I would fair lady, that thy latter observation were not so true But I nothing doubt, Robin, that if Richard could hear your friar, and see you and your fair lady as I now do there is not a man in England whom he would take by the hand more cordially than yourself

ROBIN Gramercy Sir Knight—

LITTLE JOHN (*Interrupting*) Hark!

(*A distant trampling of horses heard A group of horsemen in holiday dresses becomes visible among the trees*)

ROBIN God's my life! what means this? To arms, my merry men all

(*Enter Sir William*)

SIR WILLIAM No arms Robin Have you forgotten Sir William of the Lee?

ROBIN No, by my fay, and right welcome again to Sherwood

SIR WILLIAM I come late, Robin, but I came by a wrestling where I found a good yeoman wrongfully beset by a crowd of sturdy varlets and I stayed to do him right

ROBIN I thank thee for that in God's name, as if thy good service had been to myself

SIR WILLIAM And here is thy four hundred pounds, and my men have brought thee a hundred bows and as many well furnished quivers which I beseech thee to

receive and to use as a poor token of my grateful kindness to thee: for me and my wife and children didst thou redeem from beggary.

ROBIN. Thy bows and arrows will I joyfully receive: but of thy money, not a penny. It is paid already, as this good knight can testify, who saw the messenger depart but now.

SIR WILLIAM. (*Looking round to the knight and instantly falling on his knees.*) God save King Richard!

ALL. (*in chorus, dropping on their knees together.*) God save King Richard!

KING RICHARD. (*Smiling.*) Rise, rise; Robin is king here, as his lady hath shown. I have heard much of thee, Robin, both of thy present and of thy former state. And this, thy fair forest-queen, is, if tales say true, the Lady Matilda Fitzwater. (*Marian bows her head in acknowledgment.*) Justice shall be done to thee, Robin, if thou wilt leave thy forest life and resume thy earldom, and be a peer of Cœur de Lion: for braver heart and juster hand I never yet found. (*Robin looks round on his men.*) Your followers shall have free pardon, and such of them as thou wilt part with shall have maintenance from me; and if ever I confess to priest, it shall be to thy friar.

FRIAR. Gramercy to your majesty.

(*They say farewell to the forest with something of a heavy heart. Exeunt, the friar singing as he turns his back upon its bounds:*

Ye pleasant sights of leaf and flower,
Ye pleasant sounds of bird and bee,
Ye sports of deer in sylvan bower,
Ye feasts beneath the greenwood tree,
Ye baskings in the vernal sun,
Ye slumbers in the summer dell,
Ye trophies that this arm has won—
And must you hear your friar's farewell?)

TROUBLED TIMES IN SCOTLAND

CHARACTERS

MR MORTON *Laird of Milnwood*
 HARRY MORTON *his nephew*
 SERGEANT BOTHWELL *a soldier*
 FOUR TROOPERS *(under Sergeant Bothwell)*
 CUDDIE HEADRIGG
 MRS WILSON *Mr Morton's Housekeeper*
 MAUSE HEADRIGG *an old Whig Cuddie's mother*
 GRAHAME OF CLAVERHOUSE *a Life Guard Officer*
 MAJOR BELLENDEN
 LORD EVANDALE
 LADY MARGARET BELLENDEN
 EDITH BELLENDEN
 JENNY *Edith's Attendant*
 Attendants and Servants

SCENE I

The dining hall at Milnwood The Laird and his nephew seated with the housekeeper above the salt Below the salt CUDDIE and his mother OLD ROBIN a housemaid and two laborers All engaged with their dinners CUDDIE eating voraciously

MILNWOOD *(To himself as he looks at Cuddie)* Pay thee wages quotha? Thou wilt eat in a week the value of mair than thou canst work for in a month

(Loud knocking off The company looks in alarm at the door—the housekeeper runs to look through a spy hole)

MRS WILSON *(Returning wringing her hands)* The red-coats! the red coats!

MILNWOOD Robin—Ploughman what ca they ye?—Barnsman—Nevoiy Harry—open the door open the door! *(He slips all the silver spoons into his pocket)* Speak them fair sirs—they winna bide thrawing—we're a harmed!

(All the servants start up, one opens the door and admits Sergeant Bothwell and four troopers.)

CUDDIE. *(To Mause.)* Now, ye daft auld carline, mak yoursell deaf—and let me speak for ye. I wad like ill to get my neck raxed for an auld wife's clashes, though ye be our mither.

MAUSE. Oh, hinny, ay; I'se be silent. But bethink ye, my dear, them that deny the Word——

MILNWOOD. What is your pleasure here, gentlemen?

BOTHWELL. We come in behalf of the king. Why did you keep us so long standing at the door?

MILNWOOD. We were at dinner, and the door was locked as is usual in this country. I am sure, gentlemen, if I had ken'd ony servants of our gude king had stood at the door—But wad ye please to drink some ale—or some brandy—or a cup of claret wine? *(He pauses between each item.)*

1ST TROOPER. Claret for me.

2ND TROOPER. I like ale better, provided it is right juice of John Barleycorn.

MILNWOOD. Better never was malted. I can hardly say sae muckle for the claret. It's thin and cauld, gentlemen.

BOTHWELL. Brandy, ale, claret? We'll try them all, and stick to that which is best. There's sense in that, if the worst Whig in Scotland had said it. *(Milnwood pulls out two great keys, which he gives to Mrs. Wilson. Exit Mrs. Wilson.)*

BOTHWELL. *(Seating himself, and fishing in the broth with a fork, upon which he secures a small mutton cutlet.)* What's this? Meat? I think I could eat a bit. *(He tries.)* Why, it's as tough as if——

MILNWOOD. *(In haste.)* If there is anything better in the house, sir——

BOTHWELL. No, no, it's not worth while; I must proceed to business. You attend Poundtext, the presbyterian parson, I understand, Mr. Morton?

MILNWOOD By the indulgence of his gracious majesty and the government for I wad do nothing out of law The ministers are a hamelier kind of folk and I can follow their doctrine better

BOTHWELL Well I care nothing about that ' they are indulged and there s an end of it but for my part if I were to give the law never a crop-ear d cur of the whole pack should bark in a Scotch pulpit (*Enter Mrs Wilson with wine*) There comes the liquor put it down my good ldy (*He empties claret into a beaker and drinks it*) You did your wine injustice my friend Will you pledge me to the king s health ?

MILNWOOD With pleasure in ale but I never drink claret and keep only a very little for some honoured friends

BOTHWELL Like me I suppose (*He pushes the bottle over to Henry Morton*) Here young man pludge you the king s health (*Henry fills a small glass in spite of nudges and signs from his uncle*)

BOTHWELL Well have ve all drunk the toast ? (*He looks at Mause*) What is that old wife about ? She shall drink the king s health

CUDDIE If your honour pleases this is my mither sir and she s deaf as Corra linn but if your honour pleases I am ready to drink the king s health for her

BOTHWELL I dare swear you are—help yourself man, all s free where er I come—Tom help the maid to a comfortable cup Till round once more Here s to our noble commander Colonel Grahame of Claverhouse ! What is the old woman groaning for ? She looks as very a Whig as ever sate on a hill side Do you renounce the Covenant good woman ?

CUDDIE Whilk covenant is your honour meaning ? Is it the Covenant of Works or the Covenant of Grace ?

BOTHWELL Any covenant all covenants that were ever hatched

CUDDIE. (*Shouting into Mause's ear.*) Mither, the gentleman wants to ken if ye will renunce the Covenant of Works.

MAUSE. With all my heart, Cuddie, and pray that my feet may be delivered from the snare thereof.

BOTHWELL. Come, the old dame has come off more frankly than I expected. You have all heard, I suppose, of the horrid and barbarous murder of the Archbishop of St. Andrews? (*All stare and look at each other.*)

MILNWOOD. We have heard of some such misfortune, but were in hopes it had not been true.

BOTHWELL. (*Producing a paper.*) There is the relation published by the Government, old gentleman; what do you think of it?

MILNWOOD. (*Stammering.*) Think sir? Wh—wh—whatever the council please to think of it.

BOTHWELL. (*With authority.*) I desire to have your opinion more explicitly, my friend.

MILNWOOD. (*Looking at the paper.*) I think it an execrable—murder and parricide—devised by implacable cruelty—utterly abominable, and a scandal to the land.

BOTHWELL. Well said, old gentleman. I wish you joy of your good principles. Now comes your turn. (*To Harry Morton.*) What think you of the matter in hand?

HARRY. I should have little objection to answer you, if I knew what right you had to put the question.

MRS. WILSON. Lord preserve us! to ask the like o' that at a trooper, when a' the folk ken they do whatever they like through the haill country wi' man and woman, body and beast.

MILNWOOD. Hold your peace, sir, or answer the gentleman discreetly. Do you mean to affront the king's authority in the person of a sergeant of the Life Guards?

BOTHWELL. Silence, all of you! You ask me for my right to examine you, sir; my cockade and my broadsword are my commission; if you want to know more about it,

you may look at the act of council empowerment—his majesty's officers and soldiers to search for, examine, and apprehend suspicious persons—and therefore once more I ask you your opinion of the death of Archbishop Sharpe—it's a new touch-stone we have got for trying people's metal.

HARRY. I have no hesitation to say that the perpetrators have committed—in my opinion—a rash and wicked action, which I regret the more, as I foresee it will be made the cause of proceedings against many who are both innocent of the deed and as far from approving it as myself.

BOTHWELL. Ah! my friend, I think I have seen you before, and in very suspicious company.

HARRY. I saw you once, in the public house of the town of—

BOTHWELL. And with whom did you leave that public house, youngster? Was it not with John Burley of Burley, one of the murderers of the Archbishop?

HARRY. I did leave the house with the person you have named. I swear to deny it, but so far from knowing him to be a murderer of the primate, I did not even know at the time that such a crime had been committed.

MILKWOOD. Lord! have mercy on me. I am ruined! utterly ruined and undone! That calling's tongue will rin the heel aff his ain shoulders, and waste my gudes to the very grey cloak on my back.

BOTHWELL. But you knew Burley to be a rebel and traitor, and you knew the prohibition to deal with such persons. You knew that as a loyal subject you were prohibited to correspond with him or to supply him with meat, drink, house, or victual under the heaviest pains—you knew all this, and yet you broke the law. Where did you part from him? Did you give him harbourage in this very house?

MILKWOOD. In this house! he dared not for his neck bring ony traitor into a house o' mine.

BOTHWELL. Dare he deny that he did so ?

HARRY. As you charge it to me as a crime, you will excuse my saying anything that would criminate myself.

MILNWOOD. O, the lands of Milnwood ! the bonny lands of Milnwood ! They are barking and fleeing, outfield and infield.

HARRY. No, sir, you shall not suffer on my account—I own (*turning to Bothwell*) I did give this man a night's lodging, as to an old military comrade of my father. But it was not only without my uncle's knowledge, but contrary to his express general orders. I trust, if my evidence is considered as good against myself, it will have some weight in proving my uncle's innocence.

BOTHWELL. Come, young man, you're a smart spark enough ; tell me all you know about this Burley, where he went, and where he is likely now to be found, and I'll wink as hard on your share of the business as my duty will permit.

HARRY. You will excuse my answering that question, sir. The same reasons which induced me to afford him hospitality would command me to respect his secret, if, indeed, he had trusted me with any.

BOTHWELL. So you refuse to give me an answer ?

HARRY. I have none to give.

BOTHWELL. Perhaps I could teach you to find one, by tying a piece of lighted match between your fingers.

MRS. WILSON. (*Aside to Milnwood.*) O, for pity's sake, sir, gie them siller—it's siller they're seeking—they'll murder Mr. Henry, and yourself next.

MILNWOOD. (*Groaning.*) If twenty p—p—punds would make up this unhappy matter——

MRS. WILSON. My master would gie twenty pounds sterling——

MILNWOOD. (*Interrupting.*) Punds Scotch !

MRS. WILSON. —— pounds sterling, if ye wad hae the

goodness to look over the lad's misconduct. It wad do ye little gude. I'm sure, to burn his bonny finger ends.

BOTHWELL. Why, I don't know—most of my cloth would have the money and the prisoner too, but I bear a conscience, and if your master will stand to your offer, and if all in the house will take the test-oath, I do not know but——

MRS WILSON. O ay, ay, sir, ony test, ony oaths ye please! (*Aside to Milnwood*) Haste ye away, sir, and get the siller, or they will burn the house about our lugs. (*Exit Milnwood slowly*)

BOTHWELL. (*To Mrs Wilson*) You what's your name, woman?

MRS WILSON. Alison Wilson, sir!

BOTHWELL. You, Alison Wilson, solemnly swear, certify, and declare——

CUDDIE. (*To Mause*) Oh! whist, murther, whist! they're upon a communing—oh! whist, and they'll agree weel eneuch e enow.

MAUSE. I will not whist, Cuddie, I will uplift my voice and spare not. I will confound the man of sin, even the scarlet man, and through my voice shall Mr Henry be freed from the net of the fowler.

CUDDIE. She has her leg ower the harrows now, stop her wha can—I see her cocked up behind a dragoon on her way to the Tolbooth.

MAUSE. (*To Bothwell*) And do ye think to come here, wi' your soul killing, saint seducing oaths, and tests, your snares and your traps? Surely it is in vain that a net is spread in the sight of any bird.

BOTHWELL. Eh, what, good dame? Here's a Whig miracle! The old wife has got both her ears and tongue. Go to, hold your peace, and remember whom you talk to, you old idiot.

MAUSE. Whae do I talk to! Eh, sirs, ower weel may the

sorrowing land ken what ye are. Malignant adherents ye are to the prelates, foul props to a feeble cause, beasts of prey.

BOTHWELL. (*In astonishment.*) Upon my soul, this is the finest language I ever heard.

3RD TROOPER. Curse the old hag ! gag her, and take her to head-quarters.

BOTHWELL. For shame, Andrews ; remember the good lady belongs to the fair sex. Meantime I must necessarily carry off this young man to head-quarters. I cannot answer to my commanding officer to leave him in a house where I have heard so much treason and fanaticism. (*Harry is bound.*)

CUDDIE. See now, mither, what ye hae dunc ; there 's the Philistines are gaun to whirry away Mr. Henry. (*Re-enter Milnwood.*)

MAUSE. Haud yer tongue, ye cowardly loon. If you and thae thowless gluttons wad testify wi' your hands as I have testified wi' my tongue, they should never harle the precious young lad awa' to captivity.

(*Milnwood meanwhile hands a purse to Bothwell, who weighs it in his hands, and shakes his head.*)

BOTHWELL. I daren't venture it for them : that old woman has spoken too loud, and before all the men, too. Hark ye, old gentleman, I must take your nephew to head-quarters, so I cannot, in conscience, keep more than is my due in civility money. (*He gives each soldier a guinea, retains three himself, and holds out the purse.*) Now you have the comfort to know that your kinsman will be civilly used. Only you know that these fellows of mine are not obliged to be silent on the subject of the fine sermon we have had from that old puritan. And I presume you are aware that the consequences of delation will be a heavy fine before the council.

MILNWOOD. Good sergeant—worthy captain ! I am

sure there is no person in my house to my knowledge would give cause of offence

BOTHWELL Nay you shall hear her give her testimony as she calls it herself

CUDDIE Lord! noble sir an auld wife's tongue's but a feckless matter to mak sic a fash about

BOTHWELL Hold your peace my lad while you are well Come good dame you see your master will not believe that you can give us so bryht a testimony

MAUSE Woe to the carnal self seekers giving mammon of unrighteousness to the sons of Belial that it may make their peace with them!

BOTHWELL There's a fine sound doctrine for you Mr Morton! How like you that? I think we can carry the greatest part of it in our heads. But it is your own affair (Milnwood goes to take the purse which is held out again)

MRS. WILSON (*In a whisper*) Are ye mad? Tell them to keep it it's our only chance to make them quiet

MILNWOOD I canna do it Ailie I canna do it I canna part wi the siller I hae counted sae often ower to thae blackguards

MRS. WILSON Then I maun do it mysell or see a gang wrang thegither (*To Bothwell*) My master sir canna think o taking back ony thing at the hand of an honourable gentleman like you he implores ye to pit up the siller and let us tak nae wrang for the daft speeches of an auld jaud (*turning to Mause*) a daft auld Whig randy that ne'er was in the house till yesterday afternoon and that sall ne'er cross the door stane again an' ayes I had her out o't

CUDDIE (*In a whisper to Mause*) Ay ay e'en sae I was sure that wad be the upshot o't mither

MAUSE Whist my bairn and dinna murmur—cross their door stane! weel I wot I'll ne'er cross their door stane

BOTHWELL. To hoise, men! (*Exeunt soldiers with Henry.*)

MILNWOOD. (*Sinking into a chair.*) Ruined on a' sides, harried and undone—harried and undone.

MRS. WILSON. (*To Mause.*) Ill luck be in the graning corse o' thee! The prettiest lad in Clydesdale this day maun be a sufferer, and a' for you and your daft whiggery.

MAUSE. Gae wa'; I trow ye are yet in the bonds of sin, and in the gall of iniquity, to grudge your bonniest and best——

CUDDIE. (*Dragging her off.*) Hout, tout, mither, dinna deave the gentlewoman wi' your testimony! ye hae preached enough for sax days.

MAUSE. (*Going*) Testimony... Covenant... malignants... indulgence. (*These are the only words heard, but she is muttering all the time. Exeunt Cuddie and Mause.*)

MRS. WILSON. Ill-far'd, crazy, crack-brained gowk, that she is! to set up to be sae muckle better than ither folk, the auld besom, and to bring sae muckle distress on a douce quiet family! If it hadna been that I am mair than half a gentlewoman by my station, I wad hae tried my ten nails in the wizen'd hide o' her.

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

The stone hall in Tilietudlem Tower. A table in the centre.

MORTON *discovered.* To him enter SERGEANT BOTHWELL, followed by two dragoons, one carrying handcuffs.

BOTHWELL. You must come before him, young man, but first we must put you in trim.

MORTON. In trim! What do you mean?

BOTHWELL. Why, we must put on these rough bracelets. I durst not—nay, I durst do anything—but I would not for three hours' plunder of a stormed town bring a Whig

before my colonel without his being ironed. Come come young man don't look sulky about it.

(He advances to iron Morton the latter picks up an oaken seat and threatens him)

MORTON I'll dash out the brains of the first who approaches.

BOTHWELL I could manage you in a moment my youngster but I had rather you would strike sail quietly. You had better be prudent and don't spoil your own sport. They say here in the castle that Lady Margaret's niece is immediately to marry Lord Evandale. I saw them close together in the passage yonder and I heard her ask him to intercede for your pardon. But what's the matter with you? You are as pale as a sheet.

MORTON Miss Bellenden ask my life of Lord Evandale?

BOTHWELL Ay ay there's no friend like a woman their interest carries all in court and camp. Come you are reasonable now. Ay I thought you would come round.

(Morton allows himself to be handcuffed)

MORTON *(To himself)* My life begged of him and by her! ay ay put on the irons—my limbs shall not refuse to bear what has entered into my very soul. My life begged by Edith and begged of Evandale!

BOTHWELL Ay and he has power to grant it, too. He can do more with the colonel than any man in the regiment.

(Enter Lady Margaret Major Bellenden, Colonel Claverhouse Edith Bellenden Lord Evandale and attendants. Claverhouse seats himself at the table. The others group themselves in the rear. Morton glances at Edith then walks to the table)

MORTON By what right is it sir, that these soldiers have dragged me from my family, and put fetters on the limbs of a free man?

CLAVERHOUSE. By my commands ; and I now lay my commands on you to be silent and hear my questions.

MORTON. I will not ; I will know whether I am in lawful custody, and before a civil magistrate, ere the charter of my country shall be forfeited in my person.

CLAVERHOUSE. A pretty springald this, upon my honour !

BELLENDEN. Are you mad ? For God's sake, Henry Morton, remember you are speaking to one of his majesty's officers high in the service.

MORTON. It is for that very reason, sir, that I desire to know what right he has to detain me without a legal warrant. Were he a civil officer of the law I should know my duty was submission.

CLAVERHOUSE. (*To Bellenden.*) Your friend, here, is one of those scrupulous gentlemen, who, like the madman in the play, will not tie his cravat without the warrant of Mr. Justice Overdo ; but I will let him see, before we part, that my shoulder-knot is as legal a badge of authority as the mace of the Justiciary. So, waiving this discussion, you will be pleased, young man, to tell me directly when you saw Balfour of Burley.

MORTON. As I know no right you have to ask such a question, I decline replying to it.

CLAVERHOUSE. You confessed to my sergeant that you saw and entertained him, knowing him to be an inter-communed traitor ; why are you not so frank with me ?

MORTON. Because I presume you are, from education, taught to understand the rights upon which you seem disposed to trample ; and I am willing you should be aware there are yet Scotsmen who can assert the liberties of Scotland.

CLAVERHOUSE. And these supposed rights you would vindicate with your sword, I presume ?

MORTON. Were I armed as you are, and we were alone upon a hill-side, you should not ask me that question twice.

CLAVERHOUSE. By my commands ; and I now lay my commands on you to be silent and hear my questions.

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better let her go (*Aloud*) I can do as you wish I cannot find fault with your conduct except to myself, and I must allow that your talents and accomplishments are of a high order As far as the head goes at least, you do credit to the educational system pursued at my establishment

BECKY Very well madam cancel my indentures for the remaining years and let me go

(*A knock at the door*)

MISS PINKERTON Enter! (*Enter Amelia Sedley*) It is you Amelia What request have you to prefer to me?

AMELIA (*Curtsying*) I came to inquire whether you would consider favourably a request that Miss Sharp might go home with me

MISS PINKERTON (*Aside*) This is the only point in Amelia's behaviour which has not been satisfactory to her mistress (*Aloud*) It is unaccountable Amelia your liking for Miss Sharp but in the present conditions I can refuse you nothing reasonable, she may go

BECKY Je vous remercie mademoiselle mille fois Adieu (*Exeunt Becky and Amelia*)

SCENE II

The same An hour or two later Bell rings outside Enter

MISS JEMIMA PINKERTON

JEMIMA It is Mrs Sedley's coach sister Sambo the black servant has just rung the bell and the coachman has a new red waistcoat

MISS PINKERTON Have you completed all the necessary preparations incident to Miss Sedley's departure, Miss Jemima?

JEMIMA The girls were up at four this morning packing her trunks sister We have made her a bow pot

MISS PINKERTON. Say a bouquet, sister Jemima—'tis more genteel.

JEMIMA. Well, a booky, as big almost as a haystack. I have put up two bottles of the gilly-flower water for Mrs. Sedley, and the recipe for making it, in Amelia's box.

MISS PINKERTON. And I trust, Miss Jemima, you have made a copy of Miss Sedley's account?

JEMIMA. It's to your left, sister, on the table.

MISS PINKERTON. (*Taking up a paper.*) This is it, is it? Very good. (*Opens it and reads.*) Ninety-three pounds four shillings. Be kind enough to address it to John Sedley, Esquire, and to seal this billet which I have written to his lady.

JEMIMA. Is it your usual letter, madam?

MISS PINKERTON. You know, Miss Jemima, that it is my invariable custom to indite an epistle to the respected parents—or in the case of a wealthy and well-connected orphan, to the guardians—when each pupil's sojourn in this humble abode concludes; to what end, then, that unnecessary question?

JEMIMA. I wished only to be sure, madam, that——

MISS PINKERTON. Since you have been so officious, you will now, I beg, read it once more to me, that I may judge whether it is worthy of a humble friend of the great Lexicographer.

JEMIMA. (*Opening the letter and reading.*) The Mall, Chiswick, June 15, 1813. Madam, After her six years' residence at the Mall, I have the honour and happiness of presenting Miss Amelia Sedley to her parents, as a young lady not unworthy to occupy a fitting position in their polished and refined circle. . . . In music, in dancing, in orthography, in every variety of embroidery and needlework, she will be found to have realized her friends' fondest wishes. In geography there is still much to be desired;

and a careful and undeviating use of the backboard for four hours daily during the next three years is recommended as necessary to the acquirement of that dignified deportment and carriage so requisite for every young lady of fashion.

In leaving the Mall Miss Amelia carries with her the hearts of her companions and the affectionate regards of her mistress who has the honour to subscribe herself Madam your most obliged humble servant Barbara Pinkerton. P.S. Miss Sharp accompanies Miss Sedley. It is particularly requested that Miss Sharp's stay in Russell Square may not exceed ten days. The family of distinction to whom I have recommended her desire to avail themselves of her services as soon as possible.

MISS PINKERTON Yes not unworthy not unworthy. Jemima fetch a copy of the Dictionary. (*Jemima goes to a cupboard and fetches two copies*) You have it?

JEMIMA Here it is sister. (*She puts one copy down*)

MISS PINKERTON (*Writing*) Miss Amelia Sedley

Miss Pinkerton Miss Jemima Pinkerton Yes that great P is not unworthy of this genteel establishment, Now where are the verses. (*Searches her desk*) Ah! (*Reads*) Lines addressed to a young lady on quitting Miss Pinkerton's school at the Mall by the late revered Doctor Samuel Johnson. (*Jemima timidly hands the second volume*)

JEMIMA Hem!

MISS PINKERTON (*Coldly*) For whom is this Miss Jemima?

JEMIMA For Becky Sharp. (*She trembles and turns her back to her sister*) For Becky Sharp she is going too.

MISS PINKERTON Miss Jemima! are you in your senses? Are you not aware that Miss Sharp is an artful pupil and that I have compromised my dignity quite sufficiently by allowing her to remain so long in this

establishment, without conferring upon her at parting the high honour of the Dictionary. Replace the book, therefore, in the closet, and never venture to take such a liberty in future.

JEMIMA. Well, sister, it's only two and ninepence, and poor Becky will be miserable if she don't get one.

MISS PINKERTON. Send Miss Sedley instantly to me—and tell Phoebe to bring the cake and wine. (*Exit Miss Jemima.*) Oh! I forgot. (*Rings bell. Enter Servant.*)

SERVANT. Madam.

MISS PINKERTON. Are all Miss Sedley's trunks and boxes downstairs?

SERVANT. They are, madam.

MISS PINKERTON. And Phoebe, is she bringing the refreshments? (*A knock at the door.*)

SERVANT. I suspect this is she, madam.

MISS PINKERTON. Enter. (*Enter Becky Sharp.*) (*To Servant.*) You may retire. (*Exit Servant.*)

BECKY. Mademoiselle, je viens vous faire mes adieux.

MISS PINKERTON. (*Aside.*) Why does she speak French to me, when she knows I don't understand it? (*Tossing her head.*) Miss Sharp, I wish you a good morning. (*She waves her hand, and holds out two fingers. Enter Miss Sedley with Miss Jemima behind. Becky ignores the fingers.*) Heaven bless you, my child! (*She embraces Miss Sedley.*)

MISS JEMIMA. Come away, Becky. (*Exeunt Jemima and Becky.*)

MISS PINKERTON. On this momentous occasion, my sweet child, when you are leaving my care for the responsibilities of the world outside, I consider it my bounden duty as well as my great privilege to address to you some words of counsel as well as of warning——

CURTAIN, *while she is speaking.*

SCENE III

The Hall of Miss Pinkerton's Academy Large pile of luggage in the centre Two men engaged in carrying it out A large bouquet held by a page boy Enter MISS AMELIA SEDLEY followed by a number of girls and servants The servants cross the stage the girls crowd round AMELIA—BECKY in the background

MISS SALTIRE Send my letters under cover to my grandpa the Earl of Dexter dearest Amelia good bye

MISS SWARTZ Never mind the postage but write every day you darling *(Bursts out crying)*

LAURA *(Holding Amelia's hand)* Amelia when I write I shall call you mama for I have no mama of my own you know

MISS BRIGGS *(Aside)* The only girl I ever liked out of the whole lot of them the rest are mean spiteful things and now she is going

MISS SWARTZ Oho! oho! *(She falls into hysterics)*

(Enter Miss Pinkerton)

MISS PINKERTON Young ladies young ladies what is all this commotion about?

ALL. *(Curtsying)* If you please madam Miss Swartz is in hysterics

MISS PINKERTON Oh my dear dear pupil! Carry her out tenderly Miss Jemima Miss Jemima where is Miss Jemima? Fetch the sal volatile some one and oh! you Phoebe run at once and fetch Dr Floss *(Miss Swartz is carried out)* Dear dear! my dear pupil and on this day of all! *(Exit—followed by some of the pupils who return by degrees during the next few speeches)*

MISS BRIGGS *(Aside)* Yes it's easy to see that it is because she has a hundred thousand pounds of her own! For all that she's a horrid mulatto Now if I had hysterics

Miss Pinkerton would only say: 'Miss Briggs, that is conduct unbecoming to a lady;' and send me to my room. (*Enter the Dancing Master, with his hat on; he takes it off, and makes a sweeping movement with it as he bows.*)

DANCING MASTER. Am I indeed just in time to be allowed to say farewell to the most accomplished of my pupils? My dear mademoiselle. (*He kisses his fingers.*) I kiss your hand. (*He does so.*)

AMELIA. You are very good, M. le Professeur. (*She curtsseys, and moves to the door.*)

ALL GIRLS AND SERVANTS. Good-bye, dear. Good-bye, Miss. (*Exit Amelia—Becky crosses to go out.*)

(*Enter Jemima in a hurry.*)

JEMIMA. Stop, stop a minute! (*Becky stops and turns.*) It's some sandwiches, my dear, that is, Miss Sharp; and, Becky, here's a book for you that my sister, that is, I—Johnson's Dictionary, you know; you mustn't leave us without that. Good-bye. God bless you. (*She turns, sniffs, and wipes her eyes. Becky flings the book at her feet and exit.*) Well (*gasping*), well I never! what an audacious——(*A bell rings 'off'. Enter Miss Pinkerton.*)

MISS PINKERTON. Young ladies, the bell sounds for the dancing lesson.

CURTAIN.

SCENE IV

A room in Mr. Sedley's house. Enter AMELIA and BECKY.

BECKY. Thank Heaven, I'm out of Chiswick!

AMELIA. How could you, Becky? To throw Johnson's Dictionary on the floor!

BECKY. Why, did you think Miss Pinkerton would come and order me back to the black hole? (*She laughs.*)

AMELIA. No, but——

BECKY I hate the whole house! I hope I may never set eyes on it again! I wish it were at the bottom of the Thames I do (*she sits down*) and if Miss Pinkerton were there I wouldn't pack her out I wouldn't Oh how I should like to see her floating in the water yonder turban and all with her train streaming after her and her nose like the beak of a wherry!

AMELIA Hush oh hush!

BECKY There's nobody to hear and even if there were anybody may go back and tell Miss Pinkerton that I hate her with all my soul For two years I have only had insults and outrage from her I have been treated worse than any servant in the kitchen I have never had a friend or a kind word except from you But that talking French to Miss Pinkerton was capital fun wasn't it? She doesn't know a word of French and was too proud to confess it

(*Enter Joseph Sedley in buckskins*)

JOSEPH I beg your pardon ladies I—er—haven't the pleasure—er—ahem! (*He holds out his hand*)

AMELIA It's only your sister Joseph I've come home for good you know (*She shakes hands with Joseph*) and this is my friend Miss Sharp whom you have heard me mention (*Becky curtsies*)

JOSÉPH No never upon my word—that is yes—what abominably cold weather Miss (*He pokes the fire*)

BECKY (*To Amelia*) He's very handsome

AMELIA Do you think so? I'll tell him

BECKY Darling not for worlds

AMELIA Thank you for the beautiful Indian shawls brother Are they not beautiful Rebecca?

BECKY Oh heavenly!

AMELIA I can't make you such handsome presents Joseph, but while I was at school I embroidered for you a very beautiful pair of braces

JOSEPH. (*In alarm.*) What do you mean, Amelia? (*He tugs at the bell and breaks the rope.*) For heaven's sake go and see if my buggy is at the door! I can't wait, I must go, I must go.

(*Enter Mr. Sedley.*)

SEDLEY. What 's the matter, Emmy?

AMELIA. Joseph wants me to see if his—his buggy is at the door. What is a buggy, papa?

SEDLEY. It's a one-horse palanquin. (*Joseph bursts out laughing. Mr. Sedley turns to Amelia.*) This young lady is your friend? Miss Sharp, I am happy to see you. Have you and Emmy been quarrelling with Joseph already, that he wants to go?

JOSEPH. I promised Bonamy of our service, sir, to dine with him.

(*Enter Mrs. Sedley.*)

MRS. SEDLEY. O fie! Didn't you tell your mother you would dine here?

JOSEPH. But in this dress? It's impossible.

SEDLEY. Look at him, isn't he handsome enough to dine anywhere, Miss Sharp? (*Becky and Amelia look at each other and giggle.*) Did you ever see a pair of buckskins like these at Miss Pinkerton's? (*The ladies laugh into their handkerchiefs.*)

JOSEPH. Gracious heaven, Father!

SEDLEY. There now, I've hurt his feelings. Mrs. Sedley, my dear, I have hurt your son's feelings. I have alluded to his buckskins. Ask Miss Sharp if I have not! Come, Joseph, be friends with Miss Sharp, and let us all go to dinner.

MRS. SEDLEY. There's a pillau, Joseph, just as you like it, and papa has brought home the best turbot in Billingsgate.

SEDLEY. Come, come, sir, walk downstairs with Miss Sharp, and I will follow with these two young women.

CURTAIN.

A TRIANGULAR DUEL

CHARACTERS

EASTHUPP *Purser & Steward*BIGGS *Boatswain*TALLBOYS *Gunner*JACK EASY } *Midshipmen*

GASCOIGNE }

All of H M S *Harpy*

SCENE I

The deck of H M S Harpy JACK EASY talking apart to his servant MR EASTHUPP and MR BIGGS pacing the deck

EASTHUPP It s my peccooliar hopinion that a gentleman should behave as a gentleman and that if a gentleman professes hopinions of hequality and such liberal sentiments that he is bound as a gentleman to hact up to them

BIGGS Very true Mr Easthupp he is bound to act up to them and not because a person who was a gentleman as well as himself happens not to be on the quarter-deck to insult him because he has only perferred opinions like his own (*He looks at Easy*)

EASTHUPP I should like to see the fellow who would have done so on shore however the time will come when I can hagain pull on my plain coat and then the hinsult shall be vashed out in blood Mr Biggs

JACK (*Aside*) This is too plain to be misunderstood (*Aloud—walking up to Biggs and politely lifting his hat*) If I mustake not Mr Biggs your conversation refers to me

BIGGS Very likely it does listeners hear no good of themselves

EASTHUPP It happens that gentlemen can t converse without being vatched

EASY. It is not the first time that you have thought proper to make very offensive remarks, Mr. Biggs ; and as you appear to consider yourself ill-treated, I can only say (*Bowing*) I shall be most happy to give you satisfaction.

BIGGS. (*Pointing to Easthupp.*) This is the gentleman whom you have insulted, Mr. Easy.

EASTHUPP. Yes, Mr. Heasy, quite as good a gentleman as yourself, although I ave ad misfortune. I ham of as hold a family as hany in the country ; many a year did I valk Bond Street, and I ave as good blood in my weins as you, Mr. Heasy, halthhough I ave been misfortunate—I've ad hadmirals in my family.

BIGGS. You have grossly insulted this gentleman, and notwithstanding all your talk of equality, you are afraid to give him satisfaction—you shelter yourself under your quarter-deck.

EASY. (*Angrily.*) Mr. Biggs, I shall go on shore directly we arrive at Malta. Let you, and this fellow, put on plain clothes, and I will meet you both—and then I'll show you whether I am afraid to give satisfaction.

BIGGS. One at a time.

EASY. No, sir, not one at a time, but both at the same time. I will fight both or none. (*Exit Easy. Enter Tallboys.*)

BIGGS. Whom shall I ask to be my second ? (*Sees Tallboys.*) Ah, Mr. Tallboys, I am engaged to fight a duel with Mr. Easy. Will you be my second ?

EASTHUPP. And me too : we are both going to fight him at once.

TALLBOYS. Both at once ! I will be your second, certainly, but how am I to arrange for three to fight at the same time ? I must go and read up the subject. (*Exit.*)

BIGGS. That will be all right. But I must attend to my duty. I must walk aft. (*Excunt.*)

(Enter Jack and Gascoigne)

GASCOIGNE Of course I'll act for you but I think it excessively *infra dig* of you even to meet the Boatswain but as the challenge has been given there is no retracting There s sure to be some fun in it come on let s go below (Exeunt)

CURTAIN

SCENE II

A Spot on Shore behind a Cooper s shop Enter TALLBOYS and GASCOIGNE

TALLBOYS Mr Gascoigne I have been very much puzzled how this duel should be fought but I have at last found it out You see there are three parties to fight had there been two or four there would have been no difficulty as the right line or square might guide us in that instance but we must arrange it upon the triangle in this

GASCOIGNE The triangle Mr Tallboys?

TALLBOYS Are you aware Mr Gascoigne of the properties of an equilateral triangle?

GASCOIGNE Yes that it has three equal sides But what has that to do with the duel?

TALLBOYS Everything Mr Gascoigne It has resolved the great difficulty indeed the duel between three can be fought only upon that principle (He makes a triangle on the ground) You observe in this figure we have three points each equidistant from each other and we have three combatants—so that placing one at each point it is all fair play for the three Mr Easy for instance stands here the boatswain here and the purser s steward at the third corner Now if the distance is fairly measured it will be all right

GASCOIGNE. But then, how are they to fire ?

TALLBOYS. It certainly is not of much consequence, but still, as sailors, it appears to me that they should fire with the sun ; that is, Mr. Easy fires at Mr. Biggs, Mr. Biggs fires at Mr. Easthupp, and Mr. Easthupp fires at Mr. Easy ; so you perceive that each party has his shot at one, and at the same time receives the fire of another.

GASCOIGNE. (*Hiding a smile.*) Upon my word, Mr. Tallboys, I give you great credit ; you have a profound mathematical head, and I am delighted with your arrangement. Of course, in these affairs, the principals are bound to comply with the arrangements of the seconds, and I shall insist upon Mr. Easy consenting to your excellent and scientific proposal.

(*Enter from one side Easy, from the other the Boatswain.*)

GASCOIGNE. Here, Jack, let me explain what Mr. Tallboys and I have arranged. (*They converse apart, and soon both are convulsed with mirth.*)

TALLBOYS. Mr. Biggs, you will be placed at the corners of an equilateral triangle, and will each shoot at one other while receiving the fire of the third.

BIGGS. (*Scratching his head.*) I don't comprehend very well, but I daresay it's all right—shot for shot. I'll fetch Mr. Easthupp. (*Exit. Gascoigne marks out a triangle of twelve paces, Mr. Tallboys checking it. Easy takes up his position. Re-enter Biggs with Easthupp.*)

TALLBOYS. (*To Biggs.*) This is your place (*He indicates his position*) and Mr. Easthupp, this is your place. (*He indicates the third place.*)

EASTHUPP. But Mr. Tallboys, I don't hunderstand this. Mr. Heasy will first fight Mr. Biggs, will he not ?

TALLBOYS. No, this is a duel of three. You will fire at Mr. Easy, Mr. Easy will fire at Mr. Biggs, and Mr. Biggs will fire at you. It is all arranged, Mr. Easthupp.

EASTHUPP But I do not understand it Why is Mr Biggs to fire at me ? I have no quarrel with Mr Biggs

TALLBOYS Because Mr Easy fires at Mr Biggs and Mr Biggs must have his shot as well

GASCOIGNE If you have ever been in the company of gentlemen Mr Easthupp you must know something about duelling.

EASTHUPP Yes yes I've kept the best company Mr Gascoigne and I can give a gentleman satisfaction but——

GASCOIGNE Then sir if that is the case you must know that your honour is in the hands of your second and that no gentleman appeals

EASTHUPP Yes yes I know that Mr Gascoigne but still I've no quarrel with Mr Biggs and therefore Mr Biggs of course you will not aim at me

BIGGS Why you don't think I am going to be fired at for nothing ? No no I'll have my shot anyhow

EASTHUPP But at your friend Mr Biggs ?

BIGGS All the same I shall fire at somebody shot for shot and hit the luckiest

EASTHUPP Vel gentlemen I purtest against these proceedings I came here to have satisfaction from Mr Heasy and not to be fired at by Mr Biggs

TALLBOYS Don't you have satisfaction when you fire at Mr Easy ? What more would you have ?

EASTHUPP I purtest against Mr Biggs firing at me

GASCOIGNE So you would have a shot without receiving one the fact is that this fellow's a confounded coward

EASTHUPP (*Holding out his hand for the pistol*) You ear these words Mr Biggs ? pretty language to use to a gentleman I purtest no longer Mr Tallboys death before dishonour I'm a gentleman I ham ! (*The combatants are placed Easthupp trembling violently*)

TALLBOYS. (*In a loud voice.*) Cock your locks! Take good aim at your object—fire.

(*Jack hits the Boatswain in the mouth; the latter claps his hand to the place. Biggs hits Easthupp, who rolls on the ground howling. Easthupp fires wildly and wide.*)

TALLBOYS. (*To Easthupp.*) Hold your bawling, or you'll have the guard down here; you're not hurt.

EASTHUPP. Hain't Hi? Oh, let me die, let me die; don't move me!

GASCOIGNE. I don't think he can move, Mr. Tallboys; I should think the best plan would be to call up two of the men from the shop, and let them take him to the hospital. (*Exit Tallboys.*)

BIGGS. (*Coming up, his head tied in a handkerchief.*) What are you making such a howling about? Look at me. How am I to pipe to dinner when I'm ordered, all my wind 'scaping through the cheeks. (*Turning to Jack.*) A wicked shot of yours, Mr. Easy.

EASY. I really am very sorry, and beg to offer my best apology.

EASTHUPP. Oh, dear, oh dear, what a fool I was. Hi'll hamend and lead a good life.

(*Re-enter Tallboys with two men; the latter carry Easthupp off, and are followed by Tallboys and Biggs.*)

GASCOIGNE. Well, Easy, I'll be shot, but we're in a pretty scrape; I'll be hanged if I care, it's the best bit of fun I ever met with. Ha, ha, ha——

JACK. Ha, ha, ha——(*Exeunt, arm in arm.*)

CURTAIN.

CRANFORD SOCIETY

CHARACTERS

MISS DEBORAH JENKYNs, *Daughters of the late*
 MISS MATILDA JENKYNs, *Recluse of Cranford*
 MISS SMITH, *a Friend*
 MISS BETTY BARKER, *a retired milliner*
 MISS POLE
 CAPTAIN BROWN, *a retired soldier*
 MISS BROWN, *his daughters*
 MISS JESSIE BROWN
 MRS JAMIESON
 MRS FORRESTER
 JENNY, *Servants*
 PEGGY,

SCENE I

Miss Jenkyns' drawing room. Dim light as the candles are unlighted. MISS JENKYNs, MISS MATILDA JENKYNs, and MISS SMITH stand holding 'lighters.' Card tables displayed. JENNY the servant, standing.

MISS JENKYNs Now don't forget, Jenny, that you always reply yes ma'am when I speak in front of the ladies; and you must announce the visitors properly, as I instructed you yesterday.

JENNY I ont forget for sure!

MISS JENKYNs Jenny!

JENNY I mean yes mum.

MISS JENKYNs When I ring, Jenny, you will convey the tea equipages to the parlour here, and place them on—
(A knock is heard off.) Run Jenny, and don't—*(Exit Jenny. All three ladies begin hastily to light the candles.)*
 Oh, she's gone and I'm sure she'll be guilty of some breach of etiquette.

MISS MATTY *(Pausing)* Shall I go, Deborah and—?

MISS JENKYNs Matilda! Certainly not!

MISS MATTY. (*Resuming her occupation.*) I fear we did not watch closely, last night ; this candle is shorter than any of the others. Perhaps we had better do without it ; what do you think, Deborah ?

MISS JENKYNs. As you like, Matilda.

MISS MATTY. We do not want to be accused of vulgar ostentation, do we, sister ? And I think six candles for a party in keeping with our desire to observe elegant economy.

MISS SMITH. (*Aside.*) Dear Miss Matty, she always is economical over the candles.

(*Re-enter Jenny, followed by Miss Betty Barker.*)

JENNY. Miss Betty Barker, yes mum !

MISS JENKYNs. Ahem ! (*Miss Barker curtsies to the ladies. Miss Jenkyns looks at Jenny going out.*)

MISS MATTY. Did you come in the chair, Miss Barker ?

MISS BARKER. No, ma'am ; the night was so fine, that I found the air most refreshing after a day indoors.

MISS JENKYNs. I am glad to see you at our little gathering in honour of Miss Smith.

(*Another knock ' off '.*)

MISS MATTY. That will be Miss Pole, I think.

(*Enter Jenny, followed by Miss Pole.*)

JENNY. Miss Pole. (*Exit Jenny. Miss Pole curtsies to the company.*)

MISS JENKYNs. Miss Pole, I am happy to see you.

MISS MATTY. (*Aside.*) Come, that is good ; now we can have a game of preference.

MISS JENKYNs. Will you ladies make up a table ?—Miss Pole, Miss Barker, Miss Smith, you will take a hand ? And Matilda ; I will stand out to receive our other guests.

MISS POLE.

MISS BARKER. } (*Together.*) Very pleased, I am sure.

MISS SMITH I will if you like only I'm not a good hand at—

MISS MATTY Oh come along my dear I'm sure you can play well *(They sit and begin)*

MISS JENKYNs Dear me the fire is smoking badly it must be the chimney or perhaps it is the wind

MISS POLE But there is no wind Miss Jenkyns

(Another knock Enter Captain Brown Miss Brown and Miss Jessie Brown Jenny in front)

JENNY Captain Brown Miss Brown and Miss Jessie *(Exit Jenny)*

MISS JENKYNs Miss Brown I am pleased to see you and Miss Jessie Captain Brown I am honoured *(She rings)*

CAPTAIN BROWN Faugh your chimney is smoking ma'am may I be permitted to see if I can set it right?

MISS JENKYNs It's making a deal of trouble Captain and you will soil your hands.

CAPTAIN BROWN That's all right ma'am

(He alters the register and the fire burns without smoking The ladies at the table watch—he dusts his hands)

MISS POLE *(In a subdued tone)* Just like a man!

MISS BARKER Yes even a man is useful sometimes

CAPTAIN BROWN There that is nicely now ma'am

(Enter Jenny with the tea tray)

MISS JENKYNs Thank you so much Captain Brown

(Another knock Exit Jenny returning to announce)

JENNY The Honourable Mrs Jamieson

(Exit Jenny to return with another tray)

MISS JENKYNs Madam I am gratified that you have recovered sufficiently to honour us with a visit

Mrs JAMIESON Thank you but my poor doggie is still causing me great anxiety

(Tea is served ; the four ladies stop the game. Captain Brown hands tea, &c.)

MRS. JAMIESON. What is this I hear, Miss Barker, about your Alderney ?

MISS BARKER. *(Holding handkerchief to her eyes.)* My poor cow ! The creature fell into a lime-pit, and though she was soon heard when she mooed, and rescued, she has lost most of her hair ; now she looks cold and miserable. What I am to do with her, I don't know !

MISS POLE. Why not give her a bath of oil ?

MISS BARKER. I might try it, if I could manage. What do you think, Captain Brown ?

CAPTAIN BROWN. Get her a flannel waistcoat and flannel trousers, ma'am, if you wish to keep her alive. But my advice is, kill the poor creature at once.

MISS BARKER. *(Brightening.)* Oh, thank you, Captain Brown, I shall carry out your suggestion at once. Thank you so much.

CAPTAIN BROWN. Not at all, ma'am. *(Aside.)* I never expected she'd take me at my word—what an extraordinary sight it will be. *(He stifles a laugh.)*

(Miss Jenkyns rings the bell, Jenny enters.)

MISS JENKYNs. Remove the soiled china, Jenny.

MISS POLE. I vow I am becoming as much absorbed in crochet as I was once in knitting ; but I am at my wits' end to match some Shetland wool.

MISS JESSIE. Would you allow me to assist you, ma'am ?

MISS JENKYNs. Shall we resume our game, ladies and Captain Brown ? You already have one table, Matilda ; if Mrs. Jamieson, Captain Brown, and you two ladies would make another——

MISS JESSIE. Thank you, but I am sorry to say I don't play.

CAPTAIN BROWN. Miss Brown and I shall be happy, if you will make the fourth.

MISS JENKYNs. Very well, then, I will complete the table.

MISS POLE *(To Jessie)* How do you think you can help me Miss Jessie? *(They sit for cards)*

MISS JESSIE I have an uncle my mother's brother, who is a shopkeeper in Edinburgh.

MISS JENKINS Ahem! ahem! *(Aside)* With the Honourable Mrs. Jamieson present she might have been more discreet.

MISS JESSIE I assure you I can easily get you the identical wool required. My uncle has the best assortment of Shetland goods of any one in Edinburgh.

MISS JENKINS *(Hurriedly to Captain Brown)* You will not mind playing for threepenny points?

CAPTAIN BROWN Not in the least ma'am if it is acceptable to you.

MISS JENKINS Will you give us some music, Miss Jessie? *(Aside)* It will take the sound of the shopkeeper out of our ears.

MISS JESSIE If you would like it ma'am though I assure you I play indifferently.

(She plays. Miss Jenkins beats time out of time with her feet)

Presently Jenny reappears with biscuits and wine. The players rise discuss the game &c.

CAPTAIN BROWN Have you seen any numbers of the *Pickwick Papers*? Capital thing.

MISS JENKINS Yes I have seen them indeed I may say I have read them.

CAPTAIN BROWN And what do you think of them? Aren't they famously good?

MISS JENKINS I must say I don't think they are by any means equal to Dr. Johnson. Still perhaps the author is young. Let him persevere and who knows what he may become if he will take the great Doctor for his model.

CAPTAIN BROWN It is quite a different sort of thing madam.

MISS JENKYNs. I am quite aware of that, and I make allowances, Captain Brown.

CAPTAIN BROWN. Just allow me to read you a scene out of this month's number.

MISS JENKYNs. As you please, but Dr. Johnson's style is a model for young beginners—I have formed my own style upon it ; I recommend it to your favourite.

CAPTAIN BROWN. I should be very sorry for him to exchange his style for any such pompous writing.

MISS JENKYNs. (*With dignity.*) I prefer Dr. Johnson to Mr. Boz.

CAPTAIN BROWN. (*Under his breath.*) Hang Dr. Johnson ! (*The ladies start.*)

MRS. JAMIESON. I think I hear men's voices outside. I think I must be ready in case it is my chair.

MISS POLE. } I must be departing, too.
MISS BARKER. }

MISS JENKYNs. Matilda, will you see to the ladies ? I think Jenny has retired.

(*Exit Miss Matty and the ladies. Miss Jenkyns attends to the grate ; Captain Brown whistles under his breath ; Miss Jessie re-enters.*)

MISS JESSIE. We are quite ready, father.

MISS JENKYNs. I will come and bid you all good-night.

(*Captain Brown opens the door, and bows as she goes out. She passes him with a very slight inclination.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

Two years later. Miss Betty Barker's sitting-room. Miss BARKER and PEGGY, her maid, are putting the finishing touches to the room. . A knock heard.

MISS BARKER. Wait, Peggy ! Wait till I've run upstairs and washed my hands. When I cough, open the door ; I'll not be a minute. (*Exit.*)

PEGGY Yes ma'am (Cough heard Peggy goes out as Miss Barker enters and seats herself)

VOICE (Outside) After you ma'am

(Enter Mrs Forrester Miss Lich Miss Matty Jenkins and Miss Smith They pass over and exit returning in indoor attire)

MISS BARKER How do you do Mrs Forrester? (They curtsy) and Miss Matilda Jenkins (They curtsy) Miss Pole and Miss Smith I hope you are well (Mutual curseys) Please be seated (To Miss Smith who goes to sit in the best chair) Not there let me beg of you that is Mrs Jamieson's seat

MISS MATTY Mrs Jamieson is coming I think you said?

MISS BARKER Yes Mrs Jamieson most kindly and condescendingly said she would be happy to come One little stipulation she made that she should bring Carlo I told her that if I had a weakness it was for dogs

MISS MATTY Mrs Fitz Adam I suppose—

MISS BARKER No madam I must draw a line somewhere Mrs Jamieson would not I think like to meet Mrs Fitz Adam I have the greatest respect for Mrs Fitz Adam but I cannot think her fit society for such ladies as Mrs Jamieson and Miss Matilda Jenkins (Aside) I understand the difference of ranks though I am a retired milliner

MISS POLE Still as we are for the most part elderly spinsters if we do not relax a little and become less exclusive by and by we shall have no society at all

MRS FORRESTER I am inclined to agree Besides no one who had not good blood in her veins would dare to be called Fitz

MISS BARKER I do hope Mrs Jamieson will not be long, she promised—kindly—not to delay her visit beyond half past six

(*Knock outside. Enter Peggy.*)

PEGGY. The Honourable Mrs. Jamieson.

(*Miss Barker conducts her off, and returns with her in indoor costume.*)

MISS BARKER. I am greatly honoured, ma'am ; pray take that seat, ma'am. Is the fire to your liking ?

MRS. JAMIESON. You are very civil, ma'am, I am vastly obliged.

(*Enter Peggy with the tea-tray.*)

MISS BARKER. (*Aside.*) I hope Peggy will keep her distance. (*Peggy makes signs to her.*) There, she is making signs ; what can she want ?

MRS. JAMIESON. Don't you ladies find it unpleasant walking ?

MISS SMITH. (*Aside.*) Kind of her, when she always engages the only chair.

MISS BARKER. (*Thinking of Peggy.*) Not in the least—especially as it is raining ! (*Aside.*) What does she want ? (*Sees Carlo.*) Ah I have it ! (*Aloud.*) Poor sweet Carlo ! I'm forgetting him. Come downstairs with me, poor ittie doggie, and it shall have its tea, it shall ! (*Turns to go, followed by Peggy.*)

PEGGY. (*As she goes.*) I wanted to ask you, ma'am if——

MISS BARKER. Sssh ! (*Exeunt.*)

MISS POLE. I hear that sugar has just gone up in price.

MISS MATTY. Dear me ! And preserving time so nigh. It's very tiresome of them. Why couldn't they have put it off for a month or so ?

(*Re-enter Miss Barker. Tea is served.*)

MISS BARKER. (*To Mrs. Jamieson.*) Ma'am, what will you take ?

MRS. JAMIESON. Seed-cake, thank you. (*Aside to Miss Pole.*) I never have it in my house ; it reminds me of

scented soap. But I am indulgent towards Miss Barker she does not know the customs of high life.

MISS FOLEY. I hear that Signor Brunoni is going to exhibit his wonderful magic in the Assembly Rooms next week.

MISS MATTY. Such a piece of gaudy has not been seen or known of since Wombwell's lions came when one of them ate a little child's arm. I shall have to see about a new cap.

MISS POLE. Turbans are being worn I believe.

MISS SMITH. (To Mrs. Forrester.) That is a beautiful piece of lace on your collar.

MRS. FORRESTER. Yes such lace cannot be got for love or money. I dares't even trust the washing of it to my maid. Once it had a narrow escape. I have a very good receipt for washing it in milk. Well I had tacked it together and put it to soak in milk when unfortunately, I left the room. On my return I found pussy on the table gulping as if she were half choked. At first I pitied her till all at once I saw the cup of milk empty—cleaned out!

MISS SMITH. What! The lace gone?

MRS. FORRESTER. You naughty cat! said I and I believe I gave her a slap which helped the lace down. I hoped it might disagree with her, but it would have been too much for Job if he had seen that cat come in purring not a quarter of an hour after. Then a thought struck me. I rang the bell for my maid and sent her to Mr. Hoggins—that's the surgeon you know—with my compliments and would he lend me one of his top-boots.

MISS SMITH. His top-boots! Whate'er for?

MRS. FORRESTER. When it came Jenny and I put pussy in and gave her a teaspoonful of currant jelly in which (you must excuse me) I had mixed some tartar emetic.

MISS SMITH. Tartar emetic! Oh (Laughs)

MRS. FORRESTER. I could have kissed her when she returned the lace to sight. And you would never guess it had been in pussy's inside!

(Meanwhile the other ladies have been conversing in dumb-show together over their tea.)

MISS MATTY. *(As if in response to a request.)* Very well, then, I will tell you. My great fear, ever since I was a girl, is that I may be caught by the last leg just as I am getting into bed—by some one concealed under it. When I was younger and more active I used to take a flying leap from a distance, but I gave it up, it annoyed Deborah.

CHORUS OF LADIES. What do you do now, Miss Matty?

MISS MATTY. I told the maid to buy me a penny ball, and I roll it under the bed every night; I have my hand on the bell rope ready to pull it and call out John, Harry, as if I expected men-servants to answer my ring; that is in case the ball does not come out.

(Miss Barker removes the tea things.)

MISS POLE. Are we to play 'Preference'? If so, how shall we manage?

MISS BARKER. There are six—two must play cribbage.

MISS SMITH. I would rather not play, for one.

MRS. JAMIESON. *(Snoring.)* Kha! kha!

MISS BARKER. It is very gratifying to me, very gratifying indeed, to see how completely Mrs. Jamieson feels at home in my poor little dwelling; she could not have paid me a greater compliment. That makes four of us. Miss Smith, you would like some literature. *(She fetches some fashion books—hands them to Miss Smith: the four sit down to cards.)*

MISS SMITH. Thank you so much.

(The table becomes audible occasionally, and each time)—

MISS BARKER. Hush, ladies! If you please, hush! Mrs. Jamieson is asleep.

(Mrs. Forrester is deaf, and has to strain to hear. The ladies move their lips very much when whispering.)

(Enter Peggy with a tray)

MISS BARKER Why Peggy what have you brought us ?
Oysters jelly little Cupids (*The game stops Miss Barker
and Peggy help the guests*) A glass of cherry brandy ?
(*Mrs Jamieson wakes*)

ALL Ahem !—er—no—thanks

MISS BARKER Just a leetle glass ladies, with the
oysters and lobster you know Shell fish are sometimes
thought not very wholesome (*All the ladies continue to
shake their heads*) Mrs Jamieson will you not allow me
to persuade you ?

MRS JAMIESON Well then—

(*Miss Barker fills all the glasses and hands them all
cough as they drink*)

MISS POLE It s very strong (*Puts down empty glass*)
I do believe there s spirit in it

MISS BARKER Only a little drop—just necessary to
make it keep You know we put brandy papers over
preserves to make them keep I often feel tipsy myself
from eating damson tart

MRS JAMIESON My sister in law Lady Glenmure is
coming to stay with me

ALL Indeed

(A knock Enter Peggy)

PEGGY Mrs Jamieson s chair

MRS JAMIESON Tell them to wait in the passage
(*Exit Miss Barker and Mrs Jamieson to robe*)

MISS SMITH (*In a subdued tone*) Who is Lady Glen
mure ?

MISS MATTY Oh ! she s the widow of Mr Jamieson s —
that s Mrs Jamieson s late husband you know—widow of
his eldest brother

MISS POLE By the way you ll think I am strangely
ignorant Miss Matty but do you know I am puzzled

how we ought to address her. Do you say ' your ladyship ', where you would say ' you ' to a common person ? Now, you knew Lady Arley—will you kindly tell me the correct way of speaking to the Peerage ?

MISS MATTY. It's so long ago ! Dear ! dear ! how stupid I am. I don't think—— I know we used to call Sir Peter ' Sir Peter ', but——

(*Re-enter Mrs. Jamieson and Miss Barker as Peggy comes in to announce—*)

PEGGY. The maids with lanterns.

MISS BARKER. Will you go, Peggy, and show the way, while I escort Mrs. Jamieson ? (*Exeunt—Miss Barker and Mrs. Jamieson one way, the rest, headed by Peggy, the other.*)

CURTAIN.

HANDY ANDY

CHARACTERS

HANDY ANDY, a Servant
THE POSTMASTER

MR. DURFY
CUSTOMERS

SCENE

The post office and general store of the village of Ballysloughguttery. The POSTMASTER is serving customers. Enter HANDY ANDY.

ANDY. (*Walking to the counter.*) I want a letther, sir, if you plaze.

POSTMASTER. (*Importantly.*) Who do you want it for ?

ANDY. (*Repeating his request.*) I want a letther, sir, if you plaze.

POSTMASTER. And who do you want it for ?

ANDY. What's that to you ?

POSTMASTER (*Laughing*) I cannot tell what letter to give you unless you tell me the direction

ANDY The directions I got was to get a letter, here—that s the directions

POSTMASTER Who gave you those directions?

ANDY The master

POSTMASTER And who s your master?

ANDY What concern is that of yours?

POSTMASTER Why you stupid rascal! If you don't tell me his name how can I give you a letter?

ANDY You could if you liked but you re fond of axin' impident questions becase you think I m simple

POSTMASTER Go along out o this! Your master must be as great a goose as yourself to send such a messenger

ANDY Bad luck to your impidence! Is it Squire Egan you dare to say goose to?

POSTMASTER Oh Squire Egan s your master then?

ANDY Yis have you anything to say agin it?

POSTMASTER Only that I never saw you before

ANDY Faith then you ll never see me agin if I have my own consent

POSTMASTER I won t give you any letter for the Squire unless I know you re his servant Is there any one in the town knows you?

ANDY Plenty it s not every one is as ignorant as you

(*Enter Mr. Durfy*)

ANDY (*Looking round*) Here s one thin!

POSTMASTER (*To Durfy*) Do you know if this fellow is a servant of Squire Egan s?

DURFY Yes I ve seen him there often

ANDY There, didn t I tell you?

POSTMASTER It ll be safe to give him a letter?

DURFY Yes, I should think so—Have you one for me?

POSTMASTER. Yes, sir (*He produces one*), fourpence.

DURFY. (*Paying for it.*) Thank you. (*Exit.*)

POSTMASTER. Here 's a letter for the squire. You've to pay me elevenpence postage.

ANDY. What 'ud I pay elevenpence for ?

POSTMASTER. For postage.

ANDY. Away wid you ! Didn't I see you give Mr. Durfy a letter for fourpence this minit, and a bigger letther than this ? and now you want me to pay elevenpence for this scrap of a thing. Do you think I'm a fool ?

POSTMASTER. No, but I'm sure of it.

ANDY. Well, you're welkim to be sure, sure ; but don't be delayin' me now ; here 's fourpence for you, and gi' me the letther.

POSTMASTER. Go along, you stupid thief. (*He turns to another customer who has entered.*)

CUSTOMER. I want a mouse-trap, please.

POSTMASTER. Yes, sir.

(*Several customers are served. Andy keeps walking up and down, coming to the counter at intervals and pushing aside the customers to say : ' Will you gi' me the letther ? ' At each request the Postmaster gets more and more cross and calls him sundry names. At length—*)

ANDY. (*To himself.*) I can't get what is right for my master.—I'll not give more than fourpence.—I'd better go and tell him. (*Exit.*)

POSTMASTER. Is that madman gone ?

CURTAIN. *Interval of half an hour.*

(*Re-enter Andy in a hurry, finds the shop full, but pushes his way through.*)

ANDY. I'm come for that letther.

POSTMASTER. I'll attend to you by and by.

ANDY. The masther 's in a hurry.

POSTMASTER Let him wait till his hurry's over

ANDY He'll murder me if I'm not back soon

POSTMASTER I'm glad to hear it

(Andy sees a pile of letters on the counter while the Postmaster is not looking he takes two and puts them in his pocket)

POSTMASTER (After an interval) Here's the letter

ANDY (Paying) There's the elevenpence (Aside) Well! if you do make me pay elevenpence I've got his honour the worth of his money anyhow!

CURTAIN

DISCOMFORTING A DANDY

CHARACTERS

SQUIRE EGAN of Merrydale House

MR FURLONG an Election Agent from Dublin

DICK DAWSON brother to Mrs Egan

MR MURPHY a Country Lawyer

MRS EGAN wife of the Squire

MR BIRMINGHAM a Clergyman

FANNY DAWSON Mrs Egan's sister

SCENE I

The dining room of Merrydale House After dinner the Squire and Dick Dawson at wine Enter SERVANT announcing MR FURLONG

EGAN Happy to see you Mr Furlong you seem fatigued

FURLONG Vewy!

EGAN Ring the bell for more claret Dick

FURLONG I neveh drink

EGAN A cool bottle wouldn't do a child any harm Ring Dick (Dick rings) And now Mr Furlong tell us how you like the country

FURLONG. Not much, I pwotest.

EGAN. What do you think of the people ?

(*Servant enters, sets on wine, and exit.*)

FURLONG. Oh, I don't know ; you'll pardon me, but—a—in short, there are so many wags.

DICK. Oh, there are wags enough, I grant.

FURLONG. But I mean wags—tatters, I mean.

DICK. Oh, rags. Oh yes—why indeed, they've not much clothes to spare.

FURLONG. And yet these wetches are fweeholders, I'm told.

EGAN. Aye, and stout voters, too.

FURLONG. Well, that's all we wequire. By the bye, how goes the canvass, squire ?

EGAN. Famously.

FURLONG. Oh, wait till I explain to you our plan of opewations from head-qwaters. You'll see how famously we shall wally at the hustings. These Iwish have no idea of tactics : we'll intwoduce the English mode—take them by surpwise. We must unseat him.

EGAN. Unseat who ?

FURLONG. That—a—Egan, I think you call him.

(*The Squire starts, and opens his eyes. Dick at once sees what has happened, and makes a signal to the Squire to keep quiet.*)

DICK. Egan will be unseated to a certainty. Come sir (To Furlong), fill one bumper to the toast I propose—Here's confusion to Egan, and success to O'Grady.

FURLONG. Success to O'Gwady. These Iwish are so wild—so uncultivated. You'll see how I'll surpwise them with some of my plans.

DICK. Oh, they're poor ignorant brutes, that know nothing ; a man of the world like you would buy and sell them.

FURLONG. You see they've no finesse ; they have

a certain degree of weadness but no depth—no weal finesse

DICK Oh we're plenty o' queer fellows here But you are not taking your claret

FURLONG The twuth is I am fatigued vewy—and if you'd allow me Mr O Grady I should like to go to my woom we'll talk over business to-morrow

EGAN Certainly

DICK (*Rising*) Come along Mr Furlong (*Exeunt Dick and Furlong the former returns in a minute or two, seats himself and bursts out laughing The Squire joins in*)

EGAN What shall we do with him Dick?

DICK Pump him dry as a lime kiln and then send him to O Grady—all's fair in war

EGAN To be sure Unseat me indeed! he was near it sure enough for I thought I'd have dropped off my chair with surprise when he said it

DICK And the conceit and impudence of the fellow! The ignorant Irish—nothing will serve him but abusing his own countrymen! The ignorant Irish—oh is that all you learned in Oxford my boy?—just wait my buck—if I don't astonish your weak mind it's no matter!

EGAN Is it fair Dick do you think?

DICK Fair! Why who ever heard of any one questioning anything being fair in love war or electioneering? To be sure it's fair—and more particularly when the conceited coxcomb has been telling us how he'll astonish with his plans the poor ignorant Irish whom he holds in such contempt Now let me alone and I'll get all his plans out of him—turn him inside out like a glove pump him as dry as a pond in the summer—and let him see whether the poor ignorant Irish as he softly calls us are not an overmatch for him

EGAN Egad! I believe you're right Dick

CURTAIN

SCENE II

The same, next day. Dinner is just commencing.

FURLONG. Now, Mr. O'Gwady, had we not better talk over our election business ?

MURPHY. Oh ! hang business.

FURLONG. What do you say, Mr. O'Gwady ?

EGAN. 'Faith, I think we might as well amuse ourselves.

FURLONG. But the election is weally of such consequence ; I should think it would be a wema'kbly close contest ; and we have no time to lose, I should think—with submission.

MURPHY. My dear sir, we'll beat them hollow ; our canvass has been most prosperous ; there's only one thing I'm afraid of——

FURLONG. What is that ?

MURPHY. That Egan has money ; and I'm afraid he'll bribe high.

FURLONG. (*Nodding wisely and winking.*) As for bwibewy, neve' mind that. We'll spend money too. We're pwepared for that ; plenty of money will be advanced, for the gov'nment is weally anxious that you' Mr. Scatte'bwain should come in.

MURPHY. Oh then, all's right. But—(*in an undertone*)—Mr. Furlong—be cautious how you mention money ; the wind of the word might unseat our man on petition.

FURLONG. Oh, let me alone ! I know a twick too many for that ; let them catch me betwaying a secwet ! No, no—wather too sharp for that.

MURPHY. Oh ! don't suppose, my dear sir, that I doubt your caution for a moment. But at the same time don't be angry with me for just hinting to you that some of the Irish chaps are rogues.

FURLONG. Now suppose befo'e the opening of the poll we should pwopose, as it were, with a view to save time,

that the bwibewy oath should not be administeed on either side

MURPHY That s an elegant idea You re a janus
Mr Furlong and I admire you

FURLONG Oh you flatte me weally
(*A knock heard without*)

MRS EGAN Did you invite any one to dinner my dear?

EGAN No my dear Did you Dick?

DICK No (*Rises*) I ll go and se who it is

(*The family exchance glances Enter Servant followed by Mr Bermingham*)

SERVANT Mr Bermingham

MR BERMINGHAM My dear Mrs Egan how do you do?
Took a friend s privilege you see and have come unbidden
to claim the hospitality of your table

(*He sits down at the table*)

FURLONG (*To Fanny*) Did he not address Madame as
Mistwess Egan?

FANNY (*Listening intently*) Yeth But (*in hispering*)
you muthn t mind him—heth mad poor man! that is
a little inthane and thinkth every lady is Mrs Egan—but
quite harmleth

FURLONG Oh! How vewy wed Mrs O Gwady gwew

IANNY Oh thhe cant help bluthhing poor thow!l
when he thays Mrs Egan

FURLONG How vewy wediculons to be sure

MR BERMINGHAM At last I have opened my new
church I preached in it last Sunday

FURLONG (*To Fanny*) Suwely they would not pe mit
an insane cle gyman to pweach?

FANNY Oh he only thinkth heth a clergyman

FURLONG Oh Miste O Gwady we saw them going to
drown a man to-day

(*Bermingham stares the Squire blushes*)

EGAN (*Hurriedly*) Some wine Mr Furlong

FURLONG. Thank you. But do they often dwown people here ?

EGAN. Not that I know of.

MR. BERMINGHAM. Talking of drowning, I heard a very odd story to-day from O'Grady. You and he are not on very good terms, I believe. (*Furlong stares ; Murphy coughs ; Mrs. Egan looks down, and the Squire fidgets.*) 'Tis a very strange affair. A gentleman who was expected from Dublin last night at Neck-or-Nothing Hall arrived at the village, and thence took a post-chaise, since when he has not been heard of ; and as a post-chaise was discovered this morning sunk in the river, it is suspected the gentleman has been drowned either by accident or design——

FURLONG. Why, sir, that must be me.

MR. BERMINGHAM. You, sir !

FURLONG. Yes, sir. I took a post-chaise at the village last night—and I'm an office' of the gove'ment.

MR. BERMINGHAM. But you're not drowned, sir, and he was.

FURLONG. To be sure I'm not dwowned ; but I'm the pe'son.

MR. BERMINGHAM. Quite impossible, sir ; you can't be the person.

FURLONG. Why, sir, do you expect to pe'swade me out of my own identity ?

MR. BERMINGHAM. Allow me, sir, for a moment to explain to you. You see, it could not be you, for the gentleman was going to O'Grady's.

FURLONG. Well, sir, and here I am.

(*Fanny catches Mr. Bermingham's eye, taps her forehead, and shakes her head.*)

MR. BERMINGHAM. Oh, I beg pardon, sir. I see it's a mistake of mine.

FURLONG. There certainly is a vewy gweat mistake somewhere. (*To Egan.*) Pway Miste' O'Gwady, that is,

if you are Miste O Gwady—will you tell me if you are Miste O Gwady?

EGAN Sir you have chosen to call me O Grady ever since you came here—but my name is Egan

FURLONG What! The member for the county?

EGAN (*Laughing*) Yes Do you want a frank?

DICK Twill save your friends postage when you write to them to say you're safe

FURLONG Miste Wegan I conside myself vewy ill used

MURPHY You're the first man I ever heard of being ill used in Merryvale House

FURLONG Sir it is a gweyous wong

MR BIRMINGHAM What is this all about?

(*The whole table bursts into roars of laughter*)

EGAN My dear friend this gentleman came to my house last night and I took him for a visitor whom I have been expecting for some days He thought, it appears this was Neck-or-Nothing Hall and thus a mutual mistake has risen All I can say is that you are most welcome Mr Furlong to the hospitality of this house as long as you please

FURLONG But sir you should not have allowed me to remain in you house

EGAN That's a doctrine in which you will find it difficult to make an Irish host coincide

FURLONG But you must have known sir that it was not my intention to come to you house

EGAN How could I know that sir?

FURLONG Why Miste Wegan—you know—that is—in fact—hang it sir (*in a rage*) you know I told you all about our electioneering tactics (*The whole table roars again*) Well sir I protest it is extremely unfair

DICK You know my dear sir we Irish are such poor ignorant creatures according to your own account, that

we can make no use of the knowledge with which you have so generously supplied us.

EGAN. You know we have no real finesse.

FURLONG. Sir, there is a certain finesse that is fair, and another that is unfair—and I pwotest against——

MURPHY. Pooh! Pooh! Never mind trifles. Just wait till to-morrow, and I'll——

FURLONG. Sir, no consideration would make me wemain anothe' wower in this house. As soon, Miste' Wegan, as you can tell me how I can get to the house to which I intended to go, I will be weady to bid you good evening.

EGAN. If you are determined, Mr. Furlong, to remain here no longer, I shall not press my hospitality upon you; whenever you decide on going, my carriage shall be at your service.

FURLONG. The soone' the bette', sir.

EGAN. Dick, ring the bell. Pass the claret, Murphy. (*Enter Servant.*) Order the cariage at once.

SERVANT. Yes, sir. (*Exit*)

EGAN. Will you not have some more wine before you go?

FURLONG. No, thank you, Miste' Wegan, after being twicked in the manner that a——

EGAN. Mr. Furlong, you have said quite enough about that. When you came into my house last night, I had no intention of piactising any joke upon you. But you vaunted your own superior intelligence and finesse over us, sir, and told us you came down to overthrow poor Pat in the trickery of electioneering movements. Under those circumstances, sir, I think what we have done is quite fair. We have shown you that you are no match for us in the finesse upon which you pride yourself so much. Good evening, Mr. Furlong; I hope we part without owing each other any ill-will. (*He offers to shake hands.*)

FURLONG (*Drawing himself up*) Weally—er—I must say—er—atwocious—

DICK What s that you say? You don't speak very plain and I'd like to be sure of the last word you used

FURLONG I mean to say that a—

DICK I tell you this Mr Furlong all that has been done is my doing I've humbugged you sir humbugged I've sold you dead I've pumped you sir—all your electioneering bag of tricks And now go off to O Grady and tell him how the poor ignorant Irish have done you

CURTAIN

A FAMILY DISCUSSION

CHARACTERS

MR TULLIVER

MR DEANE

MR GLEGG

MR PULLET

MRS TULLIVER

MRS GLEGG

MRS DEANE

MRS PULLET

Sisters wives of the above named gentlemen

SCENE

The parlour of Mr Tulliver's farm house MR and MRS TULLIVER MR and MRS GLEGG, MR and MRS DEANE MR and MRS PULLET discovered seated

MRS TULLIVER Mr Tulliver it's time now to tell the children's aunts and uncles what you are thinking of doing with Tom isn't it?

TULLIVER Very well, I've no objections to tell anybody what I mean to do with him I've settled to send him to a Mr Stelling a parson down at Kings Lorton there—an uncommon clever fellow I understand—as I put him up to most things

(General movement of surprise)

PULLET Why what can you be going to send him to a parson for? *(He looks at Glegg and Deane)*

TULLIVER. Why, because the parsons are the best schoolmasters, by what I can make out. Jacobs at th'academy's no parson, and he's done very bad by the boy; and I made up my mind, if I sent him to school again, it should be to somebody different from Jacobs. And this Mr. Stelling, by what I can make out, is the sort of man I want. And I mean my boy to go to him at Midsummer. (*He takes snuff.*)

DEANE. (*Copying him.*) You'll have to pay a swinging half-yearly bill, then, eh, Tulliver?

GLEGG. What! do you think the parson'll teach him to know a good sample o' wheat when he sees it, neighbour Tulliver?

TULLIVER. Why, you see, I've got a plan in my head about Tom.

MRS. GLEGG. Well, if I may be allowed to speak, and it's seldom as I am, I should like to know what good is to come to the boy, by bringing him up above his fortune.

TULLIVER. (*Looking at the men.*) Why, you see, I've made up my mind not to bring Tom up to my own business. I've had my thoughts about it all along. I mean to put him to some business as he can go into without capital, and I want to give him an eddication as he'll be even wi' the lawyers and folk, and put me up to a notion now and then.

MRS. GLEGG. It 'ud be a fine deal better for some people, if they'd let the lawyers alone.

DEANE. Is he at the head of a grammar-school, then, this clergyman—such as that at Market Bewley?

TULLIVER. No—nothing o' that. He won't take more than two or three pupils—and so he'll have the more time to attend to 'em, you know.

PULLET. Ah, and get his eddication done the sooner; they can't learn much at a time when there's so many of 'em.

GREGG But he'll want the more pay I doubt.

TULLIVER Aye aye a cool hundred that's all But then you know it's an investment Tom's education'll be so much capital to him.

GREGG Aye there's something in that well well, neighbour Tulliver you may be right you may be right.

When Tom has got that money spent

Then learning is most excellent

I remember seeing these two lines wrote on a window at Buxton But us that have got no learning had better keep our money ch. neighbour Puller.

MRS GREGG Mr Gregg I wonder at you It's very unbecoming in a man of your age and belongings.

GREGG What's unbecoming Mrs Gregg *(He winks at the company)* My new livery suit as I've got on?

MRS GREGG I pity your wakeness Mr Gregg I say it's unbecoming to make a joke when you see your own kin going headlong to ruin.

TULLIVER *(Vexed)* If you mean me by that you needn't trouble yourself to fret about me I can manage my own affairs without troubling either folk.

DEANE *(Trying to smother things over)* Bless me I why, now I come to think of it somebody said Wakem was going to send his son the deformed lad—to a clergyman—didn't they Susan *(To his wife)*

MRS DEANE I can give no account of it I'm sure.

TULLIVER Well if Wakem thinks of sending his son to a clergyman depend on it I shall make no mistake in sending Tom to one Wakem knows the length of every man's foot he's got to deal with.

MRS PULLER But Lawyer Wakem's son's got a hump-back it's more natural to send him to a clergyman.

GREGG Yes you must consider that neighbour Tulliver Wakem's son isn't likely to follow any business Wakem'll make a gentleman of him poor fellow.

MRS. GLEGG. Mr. Glegg, you'd far better hold your tongue. Mr. Tulliver doesn't want to know your opinion nor mine neither. There's folks in the world as knows better than everybody else.

TULLIVER. Why, I should think that's you, if we're to trust your own tale.

MRS. GLEGG. (*Sarcastically.*) Oh, I say nothing. My advice has never been asked, and I don't give it.

TULLIVER. It'll be the first time then. It's the only thing you're over-ready at giving.

MRS. GLEGG. I've been over-ready at lending, then; if I haven't been over-ready at giving. There's folks I've lent money to, as perhaps I shall repent o' lending money to kin.

GLEGG. Come, come, come.

TULLIVER. You've got a bond for it, I reckon, and you've had your five per cent., kin or no kin.

MRS. TULLIVER. (*Placatingly.*) Sister, drink your wine, and let me give you some almonds and raisins.

MRS. GLEGG. Bessy, I'm sorry for you; it's poor work talking o' almonds and raisins.

MRS. PULLET. (*Whimpering.*) Lors, sister Glegg, don't be so quarrelsome. You may be struck with a fit, getting so red in the face after dinner, and we are but just out of mourning, all of us—and all wi' gowns craped alike and put by—it's very bad among sisters.

MRS. GLEGG. I should think it is bad. Things are come to a fine pass when one sister invites the other to her house o' purpose to quarrel with her and abuse her.

GLEGG. Softly, softly, Jane—be reasonable, be reasonable.

TULLIVER. Who wants to quarrel with you? It's you as can't leave people alone, but must be gnawing at 'em for ever. I should niver want to quarrel with any woman if she kept her place.

MRS GLEGG My place indeed! There s your betters Mr Tulliver as are dead and in their grave treated me with a different sort o respect to what you do—*though* I ve got a husband as ll sit by and see me abused by them as ud never ha had the chance if there hadnt been them in our family as married worse than they might ha done

TULLIVER If you talk o that my family s as good as yours—and better for it hasn t got an ill tempered woman in it

MRS GLEGG (*Rising*) Well I don t know whether you think it s a fine thing to sit by and hear me insulted Mr Glegg but I m not going to stay a minute longer in this house You can stay let t d and come home with the gig and I ll walk home (*Exit*)

GLEGG Dear heart dear heart! (*Exit*)

MRS TULLIVER Mr Tulliver how could you talk so?

TULLIVER Let her go and the sooner the better she won t be trying to domineer over *us* again in a hurry

MRS TULLIVER Sister Pullet do you think it ud be any use for you to go after her and try to pacify her?

DEANE Better not better not you ll make it up another day

MRS TULLIVER Then sisters shall we go and look at the children? (*Exeunt the ladies*)

CURTAIN

A MISER'S LOSS

CHARACTERS

SNELL, *Landlord of the 'Rainbow'*

BOB, *A Butcher*

DOWLAS, *A Farmer and Veterinary Surgeon*

MACEY, *A Tailor and Parish Clerk*

TOOKLY, *his Assistant*

WINTHROP, *A Wheelwright*

SILAS MARNER, *A Miserly Weaver*

JEM RODNEY

SCENE

The kitchen of the 'Rainbow', the Inn of Raveloe. The company seated in old-fashioned chairs.

SNELL. Some folks 'ud say that was a fine beast you druv in yesterday, Bob.

BOB. And they wouldn't be lar wrong.

DOWLAS. Was it a red Durham?

BOB. Red it was, and a Durham it was.

DOWLAS. Then you needn't tell *me* who you bought it of. I know who it is has got the red Durhams of this country-side. And she'd a white star on her brow, I'll bet a penny.

BOB. Well; yes, she might; I don't say contrairy.

DOWLAS. I knew that well. If I don't know Mr. Lam-meter's cows, I should like to know who does—that's all. And as for the cow you've bought, bargain or no bargain, I've been at the drenching of her—contradick me who will.

BOB. I'm not for contradicting no man, I'm for peace and quietness. Some are for cutting long ribs—I'm for cutting 'em short myself, but *I* don't quarrel with 'em. All I say is, it's a lovely carcass.

DOWLAS. Well, it's the cow I drenched, whatever it

is and it was Mr Lammeter's cow, else you told a lie when you said it was a red Durham

BOB I tell no lies and I contradict none—not if a man was to swear himself black he's no meat of mine All I say is it's a lovely carcass And what I say I'll stick to, but I'll quarrel wi' no man

DOWLAS (*Sarcastically*) No and praps you ain't headed and praps you didn't say the cow was a red Durham and praps you didn't say she'd got a star on the brow stuck to that now you're at it

SNELL Come come let the cow alone The truth lies between you you're both right and both wrong as I allays says And as for the cow's being Mr Lammeter's I say nothing to that but this I say as the Rainbow's the Rainbow And for the matter o' that if the talk is to be o' the Lammeters (*turning to Mr Macey*) you know the most upo' that head ch Mr Macey?

MACEY (*Smiling in pity*) Aye aye I know I know but I let other folk talk I've laid by now, and give up to the young uns Ask them as have been to school at Tarley, th' y've learnt pernouncing, that's come up since my day

TOOKEY If you're pointing at me Mr Macey I'm nowise a man to speak out of my place As the psalm says—

I know what's right nor only so,
But also practise what I know

WINTHROP Well then I wish you'd keep hold o' the tune when it's set for you, if you're for practising I wish you'd practise that

TOOKEY Mr Winthrop if you'll bring me any proof as I'm in the wrong I'm not the man to say I won't alter But there's people set up their own ears for a standard and expect the whole choir to follow 'em There may be two opinions, I hope

MACEY. Aye, aye, you're right there, Tookey, there's allays two 'pinions. There'd be two 'pinions about a cracked bell, if the bell could hear itself.

TOOKEY. Well, Mr. Macey, I undertook to partially fill up the office of parish-clerk, whenever your infirmities should make you unfitting and it's one of the rights thereof to sing in the choir—else why have you done the same yourself?

WINTHROP. Ah! but the old gentleman and you are two folks. The old gentleman's got a gift. Why, the Squire used to invite him to take a glass, only to hear him sing the 'Red Rovier', didn't he, Mr. Macey? But as for you, Mr. Tookey, you'd better stick to your 'Amens'; your voice is well enough when you keep it up in your nose. It's your inside as isn't right made for music; it's no better than a hollow stalk.

TOOKEY. I see what it is plain enough. There's a conspiracy to turn me out o' the choir, as I shouldn't share the Christmas money—that's where it is.

WINTHROP. Nay, nay, Tookey, we'll pay you your share to keep out of it—that's what we'll do. (*General laughter.*)

SNELL. Come, come, a joke's a joke. We're all good friends here, I hope. We must give and take. You're both right and both wrong, as I say. I agree wi' Mr. Macey here, as there's two opinions; and if mine was asked, I should say they're both right.

BOB. To be sure, we're fond of our old clerk; it's natural, and him used to be such a singer, and got a brother as is known for the first fiddler in this country-side. Eh, it's a pity but what Soloman lived in our village, eh, Mr. Macey?

MACEY. Aye, aye, our family's been known for musicianers as far back as anybody can tell. But them things are dying out; there's no voices like what there used to be.

SNELL Aye you remember when first Mr Lammeter's father came into these parts don't you Mr Macey?

MACEY I should think I did

SNELL Old Mr Lammeter had a pretty fortune didn't they say when he came into these parts?

MACEY Well yes but I daresay it's as much as this Mr Lammeter's done to keep it whole For there was allays a talk as nobody could get rich on the Warrens though he holds it cheap for it's what they call Charity Land

BOB Aye and there's few folks know so well as you how it come to be Charity Land eh Mr Macey?

MACEY How should they? Why my grandfather made the groom's livery for the Mr Cliff as came and built the big stables at the Warrens A I unnon tailor, some folks said as had gone mad wth cheating He got queerer nor ever and they said he used to go out iⁿ the dead o' the night wth a lantern in his hand to the stables and set a lot o' lights burning At last he died and left all his property to a London Charity and that's how the Warrens come to be Charity Land

SNELL Aye but there's more going on in the stables than what folks see by daylight eh Mr Macey?

MACEY Aye aye go that way of a dark night that's all (*Mysteriously*) and then make believe if you like as you didn't see lights iⁿ the stables nor hear the stamping o' the hosses and howling too if it's tow'rt daybreak

SNELL What do you say to that Dowlas? There's a nut for you to crack

DOWLAS Say? I say what a man should say as doesn't shut his eyes to look at a sign post I say as I'm ready to wager any man ten pounds if he'll stand out wth me any dry night in the pasture before the Warren stables as we shall neither see lights nor hear noises

WINTHROP Why Dowlas that's easy betting that is.

Folks as believe in it aren't a-going to venture near it for a matter o' ten pounds.

MACEY. If Master Dowlas wants to know the truth of it—let him go and stan' by himself—there 's nobody 'ull hinder him.

DOWLAS. Thank you! I'm obliged to you. I don't want to make out the truth about ghos'es; I know it already.

SNELL. Aye, but there 's this in it, Dowlas. There 's folks, i' my opinion, they can't see ghos'es, not if they stood as plain as a pike-staff before them. And there 's reason i' that. For there 's my wife, now, can't smell, not if she'd the strongest o' cheese under her nose. I never see'd a ghost myself; but then I says to myself, 'Very like I haven't got the smell for them'. And so, I'm for holding with both sides.

DOWLAS. Tut, tut, what 's smell got to do with it? Did ever a ghost give a man a black eye? If ghos'es want me to believe in 'em, let 'em leave off skulking i' the dark and i' lone places——

MACEY. As if ghos'es 'ud want to be believed in by anybody so ignirant!

*(Enter Silas Marner unheard. The company sees him—
a dead silence, broken only by the hard breathing of
the new-comer.)*

SNELL. Master Marner, what 's lacking to you? What 's your business here?

MARNER. Robbed! I've been robbed! I want the constable—and the Justice——

SNELL. Lay hold on him, Jem Rodney, he 's off his head I doubt. He 's wet through.

RODNEY. Come and lay hold of him yourself, Mr. Snell, if you've a mind. He 's been robbed, and *(muttering)* murdered too, for what I know.

MARNER Jem Rodney!

RODNEY Aye Master Marner what do you want wi me? (*He trembles and lifts up his drinking mug as if to defend himself with it*)

MARNER (*Clasping his hands in entreaty*) If it was you stole my money give it me back—and I won't meddle with you I won't set the constable on you Give it me back and I'll let you—I'll let you have a guinea

RODNEY Me stole your money! I'll patch this can at your eye if you talk o my stealing your money

SNELL Come come Master Marner if you've got any information to lay speak it out sensible You're as wet as a drowned rat Sit down and dry yourself

CHORUS Aye aye make him sit down

RODNEY He'd better not say again as it was me robbed him What could I ha done with his money? I could as easy steal the parson's surplice and wear it

SNELL Hold your tongue Jem and let's hear what he's got to say Now then Master

MARNER (*To Rodney*) I was wrong—yes yes I ought to have thought There's nothing to witness against you Jem Only you'd been into my house oftener than anybody else and so you came into my head I don't accuse you—I won't accuse anybody only (*rubbing his head*) I try—I try to think where my guineas can be

DOWLAS How much money might there be Master Marner?

MARNER (*With a groan*) Two hundred and seventy two pounds twelve and sixpence last night when I counted it

DOWLAS Pooh! why they'd be none so heavy to carry Some tramp's been in that's all It's my opinion as if I'd been you or you'd been me—for it comes to the same thing—you wouldn't have thought you'd found everything as you left it But what I vote is as two of the sensiblest o the company should go with you to Master Kench the

constable's—he's ill i' bed, I know that much—and get him to appoint one of us his deppity; for that's the law, and I don't think anybody 'ull take upon him to contradick me there. It isn't much of a walk to Kench's; and then, if it's me as is deppity, I'll go back with you, Master Marner, and examine your premises.

SNELL. Let's see how the night is, though. (*He opens the door.*) Why, it rains heavy, still.

DOWLAS. Well, I'm not the man to be afraid o' the rain; for it'll look bad when Justice Malam hears as respectable men like us had a information laid before 'em and took no steps.

SNELL. That's what I say. I'll go to Kench's.

MACEY. But you can't propose yourself as deppity constable, Master Dowlas. I know the law, and I know for a fact, for my father told me, that no doctor can be a constable. And you're a doctor, I reckon, though you're only a cow-doctor—for a fly's a fly, though it may be a hoss-fly.

DOWLAS. A doctor can be a constable if he likes; the law means he needn't be one if he doesn't like.

MACEY. I call that nonsense; the law is not likely to be fonder o' doctors than o' other folk. And if doctors by nature don't like to be constable, how come you, Master Dowlas, to be so eager like to be one?

DOWLAS. I don't want to act the constable; and there's no man can say it of me, if he'd tell the truth. But if there's to be jealousy and envying about going to Kench's in the rain, let them go as like it—you won't get me to go, I can tell you.

SNELL. But you won't refuse, surely, to go as a second person with me; just as a private person, so to speak, as don't want to act as constable but as accompanies me friendly.

DOWLAS Hum! Well I don't mind to oblige you know
Come along Mr Marner

*(He rises Marner follows suit They pause at the door,
looking into the night then pulling up their collars
and flattening their hats on their heads all three plunge
out into the night)*

CURTAIN

before my colonel without his being ironed Come, come
young man don't look sulky about it

*(He advances to iron Morton the latter picks up an
oaken seat and threatens him)*

MORTON I'll dash out the brains of the first who ap-
proaches

BOTHWELL I could manage you in a moment my
youngster but I had rather you would strike sail quietly
You had better be prudent and don't spoil your own sport
They say here in the castle that Lady Margaret's niece is
immediately to marry Lord Evandale I saw them close
together in the passage yonder and I heard her ask him
to intercede for your pardon But what's the matter
with you? You are as pale as a sheet

MORTON Miss Bellenden ask my life of Lord Evandale?

BOTHWELL Ay ay there's no friend like a woman
their interest carries all in court and camp Come you
are reasonable now Ay I thought you would come
round

(Morton allows himself to be handcuffed)

MORTON *(To himself)* My life begged of him and by
her! ay ay put on the irons—my limbs shall not refuse
to bear what has entered into my very soul My life begged
by Edith and begged of Evandale!

BOTHWELL Ay and he has power to grant it too He
can do more with the colonel than any man in the regiment

*(Enter Lady Margaret Major Bellenden Colonel
Claverhouse Edith Bellenden Lord Evandale and
attendants Claverhouse seats himself at the table
The others group themselves in the rear Morton
glances at Edith then walks to the table)*

MORTON By what right is it sir that these soldiers
have dragged me from my family and put fetters on the
limbs of a free man?

CLAVERHOUSE. By my commands ; and I now lay my commands on you to be silent and hear my questions.

MORTON. I will not ; I will know whether I am in lawful custody, and before a civil magistrate, ere the charter of my country shall be forfeited in my person.

CLAVERHOUSE. A pretty springald this, upon my honour !

BELLENDEN. Are you mad ? For God's sake, Henry Morton, remember you are speaking to one of his majesty's officers high in the service.

MORTON. It is for that very reason, sir, that I desire to know what right he has to detain me without a legal warrant. Were he a civil officer of the law I should know my duty was submission.

CLAVERHOUSE. (*To Bellenden.*) Your friend, here, is one of those scrupulous gentlemen, who, like the madman in the play, will not tie his cravat without the warrant of Mr. Justice Overdo ; but I will let him see, before we part, that my shoulder-knot is as legal a badge of authority as the mace of the Justiciary. So, waiving this discussion, you will be pleased, young man, to tell me directly when you saw Balfour of Burley.

MORTON. As I know no right you have to ask such a question, I decline replying to it.

CLAVERHOUSE. You confessed to my sergeant that you saw and entertained him, knowing him to be an inter-communed traitor ; why are you not so frank with me ?

MORTON. Because I presume you are, from education, taught to understand the rights upon which you seem disposed to trample ; and I am willing you should be aware there are yet Scotsmen who can assert the liberties of Scotland.

CLAVERHOUSE. And these supposed rights you would vindicate with your sword, I presume ?

MORTON. Were I armed as you are, and we were alone upon a hill-side, you should not ask me that question twice.

CLAVERHOUSE (*Coldly*) It is quite enough; your language corresponds with all I have heard of you—but you are the son of a soldier, though a rebellious one, and you shall not die the death of a dog, I will save you that indignity

MORTON *Die in what manner I may, I will die like the son of a brave man*—and the ignominy you mention shall remain with those who shed innocent blood

CLAVERHOUSE Make your peace, then, with Heaven in five minutes' space (*To the Sergeant*) Bothwell, lead him down to the court yard and draw up your party

LADY MARGARET (*Interposing*) Oh, Colonel Grahame, spare his young blood! Leave him to the law—do not repay my hospitality by shedding men's blood on the threshold of my doors!

BELLENDEN Colonel Grahame you must answer this violence Don't think though I am old and feckless, that my friend's son shall be murdered before my eyes with impunity I can find friends that shall make you answer it.

CLAVERHOUSE (*Unmoved*) Be satisfied Major Bellenden, I will answer it, and you, madam, might spare me the pain of resisting this passionate intercession for a traitor, when you consider the noble blood your own house has lost by such as he

LADY MARGARET Colonel Grahame I leave vengeance to God who calls it His own The shedding of this young man's blood will not call back the lives that were dear to me, and how can it comfort me to think that there has maybe been another widowed mother made childless, like myself, by a deed done at my very door-stane

CLAVERHOUSE This is stark madness I must do my duty to Church and State Here are a thousand villains hard by in open rebellion, and you ask me to pardon a young fanatic who is enough of himself to set a whole kingdom in a blaze! It cannot be Remove him, Bothwell

(*Edith springs to her feet, but falls fainting into her maid Jenny's arms.*)

JENNY. Help! Help, for God's sake! my young lady is dying.

EVANDALE. (*Stepping forward.*) Colonel Grahame, before proceeding in this matter, will you speak a word with me in private?

(*Claverhouse and Evandale converse apart.*)

EVANDALE. I think I need not remind you, Colonel, that when our family interest was of service to you last year in that affair in the privy-council, you considered yourself as laid under some obligation to us.

CLAVERHOUSE. Certainly, my dear Evandale; I am not a man who forgets such debts; you will delight me by showing how I can evince my gratitude.

EVANDALE. I will hold the debt cancelled, if you will spare this young man's life.

CLAVERHOUSE. (*In surprise.*) Evandale, you are mad, absolutely mad; what interest can you have in this son of an old roundhead? His father was positively the most dangerous man in all Scotland; his son seems his very model. Were he a country booby, do you think I would have refused such a trifle as his life to Lady Margaret? This is a lad of fire, zeal, and education. I mention this, not as refusing your request—if you still ask his life he shall have it.

EVANDALE. Keep him close prisoner, but do not be surprised if I persist in requesting you will not put him to death. I have most urgent reasons for what I ask.

CLAVERHOUSE. Be it so then—but, young man, should you wish in your future life to rise to eminence in the service of your king, let it be your first task to subject to the public interest, private affections and feelings. (*They return to the table, Claverhouse gazes intently at Morton, and whispers to Evandale.*) You see him? He is tottering

on the verge between time and eternity yet his is the only cheek unblenched the only eye that is calm If that man should ever come to head an army of rebels you will have much to answer for on account of this morning's work. (To Morton) Young man your life is for the present safe Remove him Bothwell and let him be brought along with the other prisoners.

MORTON If my life be granted at Lord Evandale's request——

CLAVERHOUSE Take the prisoner away Bothwell I have time neither to make nor to hear fine speeches

BOTHWELL (*Aside to Morton as he leads him away*) Have you three more lives in your pocket that you can afford to let your tongue run away with you at this rate? (*Exeunt Bothwell and Morton*)

A FAITHFUL JESTER

CHARACTERS

WAMBA *Jester of Cedric the Saxon*

CEDRIC *A Saxon franklin*

ATHELSTANE *A Saxon of royal descent*

SCENE

A cell in Front de Boeuf's Castle wherein are two prisoners CEDRIC THE SAXON and ATHELSTANE Enter WAMBA arrayed in the cowl and frock of a Hermit with his knotted cord twisted about his middle

WAMBA (*In muffled tones*) Pax vobiscum The blessing of St Dunstan and all the other saints whatsoever be upon ye and about ye

CEDRIC Enter freely With what intent art thou come hither?

WAMBA To bid you prepare yourselves for death

CEDRIC. (*Starting*). It is impossible ! Fearless and wicked as these Normans are, they dare not attempt such open and gratuitous cruelty !

WAMBA. Alas ! to restrain them by their sense of humanity is the same as to stop a runaway horse with a bridle of silk thread. Bethink thee, therefore, noble Cedric, and you also, gallant Athelstane, what crimes you have committed in the flesh ; for this very day will ye be called to answer at a higher tribunal.

CEDRIC. Hearest thou this, Athelstane ? We must rouse up our hearts to this last action, since better it is we should die like men than live like slaves.

ATHELSTANE. I am ready to stand the worst of their malice, and shall walk to my death with as much composure as ever I did to my dinner.

CEDRIC. Let us then unto our holy gear, father.

WAMBA. (*In his natural tone.*) Wait yet a moment, good uncle. Better look long before you leap in the dark.

CEDRIC. By my faith, I should know that voice !

WAMBA. (*Throwing back his cowl.*) It is that of your trusty slave and jester. Had you taken a fool's advice formerly, you would not have been here at all. Take a fool's advice now, and you will not be here long.

CEDRIC. How mean'st thou, knave ?

WAMBA. Even thus. Take thou this frock and cord, which are all the orders I ever had, and march quietly out of the castle, leaving me your cloak and girdle to take the long leap in thy stead.

CEDRIC. (*In utter astonishment.*) Leave thee in my stead ! Why, they would hang thee, my poor knave.

WAMBA. E'en let them do as they are permitted. I trust—no disparagement to your birth—that the son of Witless may hang in a chain with as much gravity as the chain hung upon his ancestor, the alderman.

CEDRIC. Well, Wamba, for one thing will I grant thy

request And that is if thou wilt make the exchange of garments with Lord Athelstane instead of me

WAMBA No by St Dunstan there were little reason in that Good right there is that the son of Witless should suffer to save the son of Hereward but little wisdom there were in his dying for the benefit of one whose fathers were strangers to his

CEDRIC Villain! the fathers of Athelstane were monarchs of England!

WAMBA They might be whosoever they pleased but my neck stands too straight upon my shoulders to have it twisted for their sake Wherefore good my master either take my proffer yourself or suffer me to leave this dungeon as free as I entered

CEDRIC Let the old tree wither so the stately hope of the forest be preserved Save the noble Athelstane my trusty Wamba! It is the duty of each who has Saxon blood in his veins Thou and I will abide together the utmost rage of our injurious oppressors while he free and safe shall arouse the awakened spirits of our countrymen to avenge us

ATHELSTANE (*Grasping Cedric's hand*) Not so not so I would rather remain in this hall a week without food save the prisoner's stinted loaf or drink save the prisoner's measure of water than embrace the opportunity to escape which the slave's untaught kindness has purveyed for his master

WAMBA You are called wise men sirs and I a crated fool But unck Cedric and cousin Athelstane, the fool shall decide this controversy for ye and save ye the trouble of straining courtesies any farther I am like John a Duck's mare that will let no man mount her but John a Duck I came to save my master and if he will not consent I can but go away home again Kind service cannot be chucked from hand to hand like a shuttlecock I'll hang for no man but my own born master

ATHELSTANE. Go, then, noble Cedric. Neglect not this opportunity. Your presence without may encourage friends to our rescue. Your remaining here would ruin us all.

CEDRIC. (*To Wamba*). And is there any prospect of rescue from without?

WAMBA. Prospect, indeed! Let me tell you, when you fill my cloak, you are wrapped in a general's cassock. Five hundred men are there without, and I was this morning one of their chief leaders. My fool's cap was a casque and my bauble a truncheon. Well, we shall see what good they will make by exchanging a fool for a wise man. Truly, I fear they will lose in valour what they may gain in discretion. And so, farewell, master; let my cockscorn hang in your hall of Rotherwood, in memory that I flung away my life for my master like a faithful—fool.

(*They exchange clothes.*)

CEDRIC. (*With tears in his eyes.*) Thy memory shall be preserved, while fidelity and affection have honour upon earth! But that I trust I shall find the means of saving thee, Athelstane, and thee also, my poor Wamba, thou shouldst not overbear me in this matter. (*A sudden doubt strikes him.*) I know no language but my own, and a few words of their mincing Norman. How shall I bear myself like a reverend brother?

WAMBA. The spell lies in two words. *Pax vobiscum* will answer all queries. If you go or come, eat or drink, bless or ban, *Pax vobiscum* carries you through it all. It is as useful to a friar as a broomstick to a witch, or a wand to a conjurer. Speak it but thus, in a deep grave tone—*Pax vobiscum*—it is irresistible. Watch and ward, knight and squire, foot and horse, it acts as a charm upon them all. I think, if they bring me out to be hanged to-morrow, as is much to be doubted they may, I will try its weight upon the finisher of the sentence.

CEDRIC. If such prove the case, my religious orders are

soon taken—*Pax vobiscum* I trust I shall remember the password Noble Athelstane farewell and farewell my poor boy whose heart might make amends for a weaker head I will save you or return and die with you The royal blood of our Saxon kings shall not be spilt while mine beats in my veins nor shall one hair fall from the head of the kind knave who risked himself for his master if Cedric's peril can prevent it Farewell

ATHELSTANE Farewell noble Cedric Remember it is the true part of a friar to accept refreshment if you are offered any

WAMBA Farewell uncle and remember *Pax vobiscum* (*Exit Cedric*)

AN EASTERN SCENE

CHARACTERS

KING RICHARD I	CHAMBERLAIN
BERENGARIA Queen	EXECUTIONER
EDITH PLANTAGENET Richard's sister	MONK
	EL HAKIM a Saracen Physician

SCENE

The right half of the stage represents King Richard's pavilion with the KING lying on a couch an executioner stands before him resting his arm on a sword four and a half feet in length The left half represents an outer tent Enter into the outer tent QUEEN BERENGARIA the LADY EDITH and attendants They are silently denied access to the KING by the chamberlains on watch

QUEEN (To Edith) You see I knew it—the King will not receive us

KING (To Executioner *within*) Go speed thine office quickly surah for in that consists thy mercy Ten bezants

if thou deal'st on him at one blow. And hark thee, villain, observe if his cheek loses colour or his eye falters—mark me the smallest twitch of the features or wink of the eyelid. I love to know how brave souls meet death.

EDITH. (*To Queen, without.*) If your Grace make not your own way, I make it for you; or if not for your Majesty, for myself, at least. (*To Chamberlain.*) The Queen demands to see King Richard—the wife to speak with her husband.

CHAMBERLAIN. Noble lady, it grieves me to gainsay you, but His Majesty is busied on matters of life and death.

EDITH. And we seek also to speak with him on matters of life and death. (*To Queen.*) I will make entrance for your Grace.

CHAMBERLAIN. I dare not gainsay Her Majesty's pleasure.

(*Enter to King's pavilion Queen, Lady Edith, and Ladies. Richard turns his back to them. Berengaria kneels before him and possesses herself of his right arm.*)

RICHARD. (*With head averted.*) What needs this, Berengaria?

QUEEN. (*Muttering.*) Send away that man—his look kills me!

RICHARD. (*To Executioner.*) Begone, sirrah! what wait'st thou for? Art thou fit to look on these ladies?

EXECUTIONER. Your Highness's pleasure touching the head.

RICHARD. Out with thee, dog! A Christian burial. (*Exit Executioner.*)

(*Turning slowly and half reluctantly.*) And now, foolish wench, what wishest thou? What seeks the lady of my heart in her knight's pavilion at this early and unwonted hour?

QUEEN. Pardon, my most gracious liege, pardon!

KING Pardon ! for what ?

QUEEN First for entering your royal presence too boldly and unadvisedly——

KING *Thou too boldly !* The sun might as well ask pardon because his rays entered the windows of some wretch's dungeon. But I was busied with work unfit for thee to witness my gentle one and I was unwilling besides, that thou shouldst risk thy precious health where sickness has been so lately rife.

QUEEN But thou art now well ?

KING Well enough to break a lance on the bold crest of that champion who shall refuse to acknowledge thee the fairest dame in Christendom.

QUEEN Thou wilt not then refuse me one boon——only one——only a poor life ?

KING (*Frowning*) Ha ! proceed.

QUEEN (*Murmuring*) Thus unhappy Scottish knight——

KING (*Sternly*) Speak not of him madam, he dies——his doom is fixed.

QUEEN Nay my royal liege and love 'tis but a sullen banner neglected——Berengaria will give thee another embroidered with her own hand and rich as ever dallied with the wind. Every pearl I have shall go to bedeck it and with every pearl I will drop a tear of thankfulness to my generous knight.

KING (*Interrupting angrily*) Thou know'st not what thou say'st. Pearls ! Can all the pearls of the East atone for a speck upon England's honour——all the tears that ever woman's eye wept wash away a stain on Richard's fame ? Go to madam know your place and your time and your sphere. At present we have duties in which you cannot be our partner.

QUEEN (*Whispering to Edith*) Thou hear'st Edith. We shall but incense him.

EDITH Be it so (*Stepping forward*) My lord I, your

poor kinswoman, crave you for justice rather than mercy. To the cry of justice the ears of a monarch should be open at every time, place, and circumstance.

KING. Ha ! our cousin Edith ? She speaks ever king-like, and king-like will I answer her, so she brings no request unworthy herself or me.

EDITH. My lord, this good knight whose blood you are about to spill hath done, in his time, service to Christendom. He hath fallen from his duty through a snare set for him in mere folly. A message sent to him in the name of one who—why should I not speak it ?—it was in my own—induced him for an instant to leave his post.

KING. (*Biting his lips.*) You saw him, then, cousin ?

EDITH. I did, my liege. It is no time to explain wherefore. I am here neither to exculpate myself nor to blame others.

KING. And where did you do him such a grace ?

EDITH. In the tent of her Majesty the Queen.

KING. Of our royal consort ! Now by Heaven, by St. George of England, and every other saint that treads its crystal floor, this is too audacious ! That you should have admitted him to an audience by night, in the very tent of our royal consort, and dare to offer this as an excuse for his disobedience and desertion ! By my father's soul, Edith, thou shalt rue this thy life long in a monastery !

EDITH. My liege, your greatness licenses tyranny. I have already said I am not here to excuse myself or to inculpate others. I ask you but to extend to one, whose fault was committed under strong temptation, that mercy which even you yourself, Lord King, must one day supplicate at a higher tribunal.

KING. (*Bitterly.*) Can this be Edith Plantagenet ?

QUEEN. (*Whispers to Edith.*) Oh, peace, peace, for pity's sake. You do but offend him more !

EDITH. I care not. The spotless virgin fears not the

raging lion Let him work his will on this worthy knight
Edith for whom he dies will know how to weep his memory

*(Enter hurriedly a Carmelite monk his head and person
muffled in the long mantle and hood of his Order He
flings himself at Richard's feet and conjures him to
stay the execution)*

KING Now by both sword and sceptre the world is
leagued to drive me mad! I look women and monks cross
me at every step How comes he to live still?

MONK My gracious liege I entreated the Lord of Gils-
land to stay the execution until I had thrown myself at
your royal—

KING And he was wilful enough to grant thy request?
But it is of a piece with his wonted obstinacy And what
is it thou hast to say? Speak in the fiend's name!

MONK My lord I swear to thee by my holy Order that
this youth hath under the seal of confession divulged to
me a secret which if I might confide it to thee would
utterly turn thee from thy bloody purpose in regard to him.

KING Good father that I reverence the Church let the
arms which I now wear for her sake bear witness Give
me to know this secret and I will do what shall seem
fitting in the matter

MONK My lord for twenty years have I done penance
in the caverns of Engaddi for a great crime Think you
I would betray the secrets of the confessional? It is
abhorrent to my very soul

KING So thou art that hermit of whom men speak so
much? And thou art he too as I bethink me to whom
the Christian princes sent this very criminal to open
a communication with the Soldan even while I lay on
my sick bed? Your envoy shall die the rather and the
sooner that thou dost entreat for him

MONK *(With great emotion)* Now God be gracious to

thee, Lord King ! Thou art setting that mischief on foot which thou wilt hereafter wish thou hadst stopped, though it had cost thee a limb. Rash, blinded man, forbear !

KING. (*Stamping with rage.*) Away ! away ! The sun has risen on the dishonour of England, and it is not yet avenged. Ladies and priest, withdraw, if ye would not hear orders which would displease you ; for, by St. George, I swear——

(*Enter El Hakim, the physician.*)

EL HAKIM. Swear NOT !

KING. Ha ! my learned Hakim, come, I hope, to tax our generosity.

EL HAKIM. I come to request instant speech with you——instant—and touching matters of deep interest.

KING. Retire, Berengaria, and, Edith, do you retire also. Nay ; renew not your importunities. This I give to them, that the execution shall not be till high noon. Go and be pacified. Dearest Berengaria, begone. Edith, go if you are wise. (*Exeunt Ladies, in hasty confusion.*)

HERMIT. (*Also retiring.*) King Richard, I do not yet shake the dust from my feet and depart from thy encampment. The sword falls not, but hangs by a hair. Haughty monarch, we shall meet again.

KING. Be it so, haughty priest, prouder in thy goat-skins than princes in purple and fine linen. (*Exit Hermit.*) Now to the matter. In what can I pleasure you, my learned physician ?

EL HAKIM. (*Bowing to the ground.*) Great King, let thy servant speak one word and yet live. I would remind thee that thou owest a life——

KING. And I warrant me thou wouldst have another——in requital, ha ?

EL HAKIM. Such is my humble prayer—even the life of this good knight who is doomed to die.

KING (*Speaking to himself as he faces his tent*) I knew what he desired as soon as ever he entered the pavilion Wife kinswoman hermit Hakim each appears in the lists as soon as the other is defeated Ha! ha! ha!

EL HAKIM (*With some contempt*) A doom of death should not issue from laughing lips Let thy servant hope that thou hast granted him this man's life

KING Take the freedom of a thousand captives instead and I will give the warrant immediately This man's life can avail thee nothing and it is forfeited

EL HAKIM All our lives are forfeited But the great Creditor is merciful

KING Thou canst show me no special interest thou hast to become intercessor betwixt me and him

EL HAKIM Many a man's life depends upon thy granting this boon

KING Explain thy words

EL HAKIM Know that the medicine to which thou Sir King and many one besides owe their recovery is a talisman I dip it in a cup of water observe the fitting hour to administer it to the patient and the potency of the draught works the cure

KING A most rare medicine I marvel there is any other in use

EL HAKIM Painful observances fasts and penance are necessary on the part of the sage who uses this mode of cure, and if through neglect of these preparations he omits to cure at least twelve persons within the course of each moon the virtue of the divine gift departs and both the last patient and the physician will be exposed to speedy misfortune neither will they survive the year I require yet one life to make up the appointed number

KING Go out into the camp good Hakim where thou wilt find many and do not seek to rob my headsman of his patients

EL HAKIM. It is enough that, by sparing this man's life at my request, you will deliver yourself, great king, and thy servant, from a great danger.

KING. When you bid Richard Plantagenet fear that a danger will fall upon *him* from some idle omen, you speak to no doting old woman who forgoes her purpose because a hare crosses the path, a raven croaks, or a cat sneezes.

EL HAKIM. Truth is on the tongue of thy servant. Bethink you, Lord King, though thou canst slay thousands, thou canst not restore one man to health. Beware how thou hinderest the good to humanity which thou canst not thyself render.

KING. (*Hardening.*) This is over-insolent. We took thee for our physician, not for our conscience-keeper.

EL HAKIM. (*In a lofty and commanding attitude.*) Is it thus the most renowned Prince repays benefit done to his royal person? Know, then, that through every court of Europe and Asia will I denounce thee as thankless and ungenerous!

KING. (*In fury.*) Are these terms to me, vile infidel? Art weary of thy life? (*Lays his hand on his sword.*)

EL HAKIM. Strike! Thine own deed shall then paint thee more worthless than could my words.

KING. Thankless and ungenerous! As well be termed coward and infidel. Hakim, thou hast chosen thy boon; and though I had rather thou hadst asked my crown-jewels, yet I may not, king-like, refuse thee. Take this Scot, therefore, to thy keeping. The provost will deliver him to thee on this warrant. (*He hastily traces one or two lines and gives them to Hakim.*) Use him as thy bondslave, to be disposed of as thou wilt. Only, let him beware how he comes before the eyes of Richard.

EL HAKIM. (*Once more with reverence.*) I have heard my lord's pleasure, and to hear is to obey.

KING. It is well. Let him consult his own safety, and

never appear in my presence more Is there aught else in which I may do thee pleasure ?

LL HAKIM The bounty of the King hath filled my cup to the brim May thy days be multiplied !

(Exit LL HAKIM *after the usual deep obeisance* Richard *gauging after him like one but half satisfied*)

A FORTUNATE ESCAPE

CHARACTERS

A MAN

ALICE *his daughter*

A STRANGER

SCENE

A miserable hotel on a wide and desolate common Within are two persons FATHER and DAUGHTER The former is counting again and again a few and paltry coins

FATHER (*Muttering*) There must be some mistake here Alice We can't be so low—you know I had two pounds in the drawer on Monday and now—Alice you must have stolen some of the money

ALICE (*Quietly*) I did not steal any father but I should like to have taken some only I knew you would beat me if I did

FATHER And what do you want money for ?

ALICE To get food when I'm hungry

FATHER Nothing else ?

ALICE I don't know Why don't you let me go and work with the other girls at the factory ? I should make money there for you and me both

FATHER Child perhaps if you went to the factory you would get away from me and what should I do without you ?

ALICE. (*Vacantly.*) I should like to go to the factory.

FATHER. (*Angrily.*) Stuff! I have three minds to—
(*A loud knock at the door of the hovel.*) What can that be?
The hour is late—near eleven. Again—again! Ask who
knocks, Alice.

STRANGER. (*Without, to Alice, who has asked her father's
question through a chink in the door.*) Pray pardon me;
but seeing a light at your window, I have ventured to ask
if any one within will conduct me to ——. I will pay the
service handsomely.

FATHER. Open the door, Alley.

(*Enter a Youth of about eighteen, carrying a small
knapsack on his shoulder. He is obviously a gentle-
man, though his dress is plain and somewhat soiled
with dust.*)

STRANGER. (*Advancing carelessly.*) I am much obliged
by your civility, and trust, my good fellow, that you will
increase the obligation by accompanying me to ——.

FATHER. (*Surlily.*) You can't miss your way; the lights
will direct you.

STRANGER. They have rather misled me, for they seem
to surround the whole common, and there is no path across
it that I can see. However, if you will put me on the right
road, I will not trouble you farther.

FATHER. It is very late.

STRANGER. The better reason why I should be at ——.
Come, my good friend, put on your hat, and I will give
you half a guinea for your trouble.

FATHER. (*Uneasily.*) Are you quite alone, sir?

STRANGER. Quite.

FATHER. Probably you are known at ——?

STRANGER. Not I. But what matters that to you?
I am a stranger in these parts.

FATHER. It is full four miles.

STRANGER (*Impatiently*) So far and I am fearfully tired already ! (*Drawing out his watch*) Past eleven too !

FATHER (*More civilly but his evil eye sparkles at sight of the watch*) I am thinking sir that as you are so tired and the hour is so late you might almost as well——

STRANGER (*Petulantly*) What ?

FATHER I don't like to mention it but my poor roof is at your service and I would go with you to —— at daybreak to morrow

STRANGER (*Noticing that Alice is gazing at him rager-eyed and open mouthed*) So be it my host Shut up your house again Bring me a cup of beer and a crust of bread and so much for supper ! As for bed this chair will do vastly well

FATHER Perhaps we can manage better for you than that chair But our best accommodation must seem bad enough to a gentleman We are very poor people—hard working but very poor

STRANGER (*Stirring the fire*) Never mind me I am tolerably well accustomed to greater hardships than sleeping on a chair in an honest man's house and though you are poor I will take it for granted you are honest (*Alice sets the fare before the traveller who gazes on her with undisguised admiration*) (*To Alice*) Prettiest of lasses a man who has travelled on foot all day through the ugliest country within the three seas is sufficiently refreshed at night by the sight of so fair a face

FATHER Eat sir and no fine words

STRANGER I did not mean to offend you but the fact is that I am half a foreigner and abroad you know one may say a civil thing to a pretty girl without hurting her feelings or her father's either

FATHER Half a foreigner ! Why you talk English as well as I do

STRANGER Thank you for the compliment What I

meant was that I have been a great deal abroad ; in fact, I have just returned from Germany. But I am English born.

FATHER. And going home ?

STRANGER. Yes.

FATHER. Far from hence ?

STRANGER. About thirty miles, I believe.

FATHER. You are young, sir, to be alone. But you would like to rest now ; you can have my bed, sir ; I can sleep here.

STRANGER. (*Quickly.*) By no means. Just put a few more coals on the fire, and leave me to make myself comfortable.

(*Father leaves the room for a supply of fuel. Alice approaches the Stranger.*)

ALICE. (*Softly.*) Have you much money about you ? If you have money, don't say so to father. Don't sleep if you can help it. I'm afraid—hush—he comes !

(*Re-enter Father. While he plies the fire, Stranger sinks into a gloomy reverie, meditates upon instant flight, but decides to remain for the time being.*)

FATHER. You will sleep sound to-night.

STRANGER. Humph ! Why, I am *over-fatigued*. I dare say it will be an hour or two before I fall asleep ; but when I once *am* asleep, I sleep like a rock.

FATHER. Come, Alice, let us leave the gentleman. Good night, sir.

STRANGER. (*Yawning.*) Good night—good night.

(*Father and Alice ascend the creaking stairs. All is still.*)

STRANGER. Fool that I am. Will nothing cure me of these walking adventures ? Had it not been for that girl's big blue eyes, I should be safe at ——— by this time, if, indeed, the grim father had not attacked me by the road. However, we'll balk him yet. Another half-hour, and I am

on the moor we must give him time And in the mean time here is the poker At the worst it is but one to one, but the churl is strongly built

(Father is seated at the foot of his bed, muttering Enter to him Alice)

FATHER *(To himself)* It must be worth twenty guineas

ALICE What is it to you father, what the gentleman's watch is worth? *(He starts at the sound of her voice)* You mean to do some injury to that young man, but you shall not

FATHER *(At first in a loud voice then in a deep growl)* How dare you talk to me so? Go to bed—go to bed

ALICE No father

FATHER No?

ALICE I will not stir from this room until daybreak

FATHER *(Fiercely)* We will soon see to that

ALICE Touch me and I will alarm the gentleman and tell him that—

FATHER What?

ALICE That you intend to murder him

FATHER *(After a pause in which he trembles violently and gasps painfully for breath)* Alice, we are often nearly starving

ALICE I am—you never!

FATHER Wretch yes if I do drink too much one day, I pinch for it the next But go to bed I say—I mean no harm to the young man Think you I would twist myself a rope?—no no go along go along

ALICE *(Vacantly)* To be sure father, they would hang you Don't forget that, good night *(Exit)*

FATHER *(After remaining motionless for half an hour)* If that girl would but sleep it might be done at once He seems quite a stranger here—nobody'll miss him He must have plenty of money to give half a guinea to a guide

across a common ! I want money, and I won't work—if I can help it, at least. (*Looking to see that Alice's door is shut.*) All's quiet ; perhaps he sleeps already. I will steal down. If Jack Walters would but come to-night, the job would be done charmingly. (*He creeps gently downstairs, picking up a cleaver as he goes.*) Aha ! and there's the sledge-hammer somewhere for Walters.

(*The Stranger meanwhile deems it advisable to retreat, but finds the door locked and the key missing. As he hears steps upon the stairs, he grasps his homely weapon prepared for the worst, and is startled to find the intruder is only Alice. Enter Alice, pale as marble, her finger on her lips.*)

ALICE. (*In a whisper.*) They are in the shed behind looking for the sledge-hammer. They mean to murder you ; get you gone—quick !

STRANGER. How ?—the door is locked.

ALICE. Stay. I have taken the key from his room. (*She opens the door : he makes but one stride to the threshold. As he is going*) Don't say anything about it ; he is my father ; they would hang him.

STRANGER. No, no. But you ?—are safe, I trust ? Depend on my gratitude. I shall be at —— to-morrow—the best inn. Seek me if you can ! Which way now ?

ALICE. Keep to the left.

(*Exit Stranger rapidly. Alice lingers for an instant, then laughs aloud. As she is creeping back after closing and re-barring the door, her father and another man advance from the inner entrance.*)

FATHER. How ? Alice here, and—— Have you let him go ?

ALICE. I told you that you should not harm him.

(*Exeunt the two men, in vague pursuit of the intended*

MR PICKWICK ENGAGES A SERVANT

CHARACTERS

MR PICKWICK

MRS BARDELL *his landlady*MASTER BARDELL *her Son*

TRACY TUPMAN

NATHANIEL WINKLE

AUGUSTUS SNODGRAES

SAM WELLER *Mr Pickwick's Servant*} *Friends of Mr Pickwick*

SCENE

Mr Pickwick's apartments in Goswell Street MR PICKWICK
pacing the room to and fro with hurried steps MRS BAR
 DELL *meanwhile is dusting the room*

MR PICKWICK. Mrs Bardell——

MRS BARDELL. Sir

MR PICKWICK. Your little boy is a very long time
 goneMRS BARDELL. Why it's a good long way to the
 Borough sir

MR PICKWICK. Ah very true, so it is

(*A few minutes elapse during which Mr Pickwick has
 been silent and Mrs Bardell has resumed her dusting*)

MR PICKWICK. Mrs Bardell——

MRS BARDELL. Sir

MR PICKWICK. Do you think it a much greater expense
 to keep two people than to keep one?MRS BARDELL. (*Colouring up to the very border of her
 cap as she fancies Mr Pickwick is going to propose to her*)

La Mr Pickwick what a question!

MR PICKWICK. Well but *do* you?MRS BARDELL. That depends a good deal upon the
 person you know, Mr Pickwick and whether it's a saving
 and careful person sir

MR. PICKWICK. That 's very true. But the person I have in my eye (*looking very hard at Mrs. Bardell*) I think possesses these qualities, and has a considerable knowledge of the world which may be of material use to me.

MRS. BARDELL. La, Mr. Pickwick !

MR. PICKWICK. (*Growing energetic.*) I do, I do indeed ; and to tell you the truth, I have made up my mind.

MRS. BARDELL. Dear me, sir.

MR. PICKWICK. (*With a good-humoured glance.*) You'll think it very strange now, that I never consulted you about this matter, and never even mentioned it till I sent your little boy out this morning—eh ?

MRS. BARDELL. (*Aside.*) He 's going to propose—sent my boy out to get him out of the way—how thoughtful ! how considerate !

MR. PICKWICK. Well, what do you think ?

MRS. BARDELL. (*Trembling with agitation*) Oh, Mr. Pickwick, you're very kind, sir.

MR. PICKWICK. It'll save you a good deal of trouble, won't it ?

MRS. BARDELL. Oh, I never thought anything of the trouble, sir ; and, of course, I should take more trouble to please you then than ever. But it is so kind of you, Mr. Pickwick, to have so much consideration for my loneliness.

MR. PICKWICK. Ah, to be sure, I never thought of that. When I am in town, you'll always have somebody to sit with you. To be sure, so you will

MRS. BARDELL. I'm sure I ought to be a very happy woman.

MR. PICKWICK. And your little boy——

MRS. BARDELL. Bless his heart !

MR. PICKWICK. He, too, will have a companion, a lively one, who'll teach him, I'll be bound, more tricks in a week than he would ever learn in a year.

MRS. BARDELL. Oh you dear—(*Mr. Pickwick starts*)—

Oh you kind good playful dear (Mrs Bardell *flings her arms round Mr Pickwick's neck with a flood of tears*)

MR PICKWICK. (*Gasping*) Bless my soul! Mrs Bardell my good woman—dear me what a situation—pray consider Mrs Bardell don't—if anybody should come——

MRS BARDELL Oh let them come I'll never leave you—dear kind good soul

MR PICKWICK (*Struggling violently*) Mercy upon me I hear somebody coming up the stairs. Don't don't there's a good creature don't

(Mrs Bardell *faints in Mr Pickwick's arms* Enter Master Bardell Mr Tupman Mr Winkle and Mr Snodgrass Master Bardell *howls and starts kicking and pinching Mr Pickwick*)

MR PICKWICK (*In agony*) Take th's little villain away he's mad

MR TUPMAN

MR WINKLE

MR SNODGRASS

} What is the matter?

MR PICKWICK (*Pettishly*) I don't know Take away the boy (Mr Winkle *carries the struggling and screaming boy to the farther end of the room*) Now help me lead this woman downstairs

MRS BARDELL (*Faintly*) Oh I am better now

MR TUPMAN (*Gallantly*) Let me lead you downstairs.

MRS BARDELL (*Hysterically*) Thank you sir thank you

(*Exit Mr Tupman Mrs Bardell Master Bardell*)

(*Re-enter Mr Tupman*)

MR PICKWICK I cannot conceive what has been the matter with that woman I had merely announced to her my intention of keeping a man servant when she fell into the extraordinary paroxysm in which you found her Very extraordinary thing

MR. TUPMAN. }
 MR. WINKLE } Very.
 MR. SNODGRASS. }

MR. PICKWICK. Placed me in such an extremely awkward situation.

MR. TUPMAN. }
 MR. WINKLE. } Very.
 MR. SNODGRASS. }

(They cough slightly and look dubiously at each other.)

MR. TUPMAN. There is a man in the passage now.

MR. PICKWICK. It's the man I spoke to you about. I sent for him to the Borough this morning. Have the goodness to call him up, Snodgrass.

(Exit Mr. Snodgrass. Re-enter Mr. Snodgrass with Sam Weller.)

MR. PICKWICK. Sit down.

SAM. Thank'ee, sir.

MR. PICKWICK. With regard to the matter on which I, with the concurrence of these gentlemen, sent for you——

SAM. *(Interposing.)* That's the pint, sir. Out with it, as the father said to the child, wen he swallowed a farden.

MR. PICKWICK. We want to know, in the first place, whether you have any reason to be discontented with your present situation

SAM. Afore I answers that 'ere question, gen'l'm'n, I should like to know, in the first place, whether you're a goin' to purvide me with a better?

MR. PICKWICK. *(Smiling benevolently.)* I have half made up my mind to engage you myself.

SAM. Have you, though? *(Mr. Pickwick nods in the affirmative.)* Wages?

MR. PICKWICK. Twelve pounds a year.

SAM. Clothes?

MR. PICKWICK. Two suits.

SAM. Work?

MR PICKWICK To attend upon me and travel about with me and these gentlemen here

SAM (*Emphatically*) Take the bill down I'm let to a single gentleman and the terms is agreed upon

MR PICKWICK. You accept the situation?

SAM Cert nly If the clothes fits me half as well as the place, they'll do

MR PICKWICK You can get a character of course?

SAM Ask the landlady o' the White Hart about that sir

MR PICKWICK Can you come this evening?

SAM (*With alacrity*) I'll get into the clothes this minute, if they're here

MR PICKWICK Call at eight this evening and if the inquiries are satisfactory they shall be provided (*Exeunt*)

AN UNFORTUNATE CHALLENGE

CHARACTERS

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY	}	<i>Members of a Theatrical Company</i>
AUGUSTUS FOLAIR		
MR LENVILLE	}	
MRS LENVILLE		
ACTORS		

SCENE I

A small bed sitting room NICHOLAS NICKLEBY seated at a table writing—*A loud knock at the door* MR FOLAIR pokes his head round the door sees NICHOLAS pretends to start and enters majestically

FOLAIR (*Taking off his hat*) Good evening sir I bring a communication Ahem!

NICHOLAS From whom and what about? You are unusually mysterious to-night

FOLAIR. Cold, perhaps. That is the fault of my position—not of myself, Mr. Johnson. My position as a mutual friend requires it, sir. (*He brings out a note from his hat.*) Have the goodness to read that, sir.

NICHOLAS. (*Reading.*) Stroke Johnson, Esq., by favour of Augustus Folair, Esq. (*He opens it and reads.*) Mr. Lenville presents his kind regards to Mr. Johnson, and will feel obliged if he will inform him at what hour to-morrow morning it will be most convenient to him to meet Mr. Lenville at the theatre, for the purpose of having his nose pulled in the presence of the company. Mr. Lenville requests Mr. Johnson not to neglect making an appointment, as he has invited two or three professional friends to witness the ceremony, and cannot disappoint them upon any account whatever. Portsmouth, Tuesday night. (*To Folair.*) Do you know the contents of this note, sir?

FOLAIR. Yes.

NICHOLAS. (*Tearing it up.*) And how dare you bring it here, sir? Had you no fear of being kicked downstairs?

FOLAIR. No.

NICHOLAS. Then (*He takes Folair's hat, and tosses it towards the door*) you had better follow that article of your dress, sir, or you may find yourself very disagreeably deceived, and that within a few seconds.

FOLAIR. (*Picking up his hat and brushing it tenderly.*) I say, Johnson, none of that you know. No tricks with a gentleman's wardrobe.

NICHOLAS. Leave the room! How could you presume to come here on such an errand, you scoundrel?

FOLAIR. Pooh! pooh! (*He unwinds his comforter.*) There—that's enough.

NICHOLAS. Enough! (*He advances threatening towards Folair.*) Take yourself off, sir.

FOLAIR. Pooh! pooh! I tell you I wasn't in earnest. I only brought it in joke.

NICHOLAS You had better be careful how you indulge in such jokes again, or you may find an allusion to pulling noses rather a dangerous reminder for the subject of your facetiousness Was it written in joke, too, pray?

FOLAIR No, no, that s the best of it, right down earnest, honour bright

NICHOLAS Come, sir, have the goodness to explain

FOLAIR (*Sitting down*) Why, I'll tell you how it is. Since you came here Lenville has done nothing but second business and instead of having a reception every night as he used to have, they have let him come on as if he was nobody

NICHOLAS What do you mean by a reception?

FOLAIR Jupiter! What an unsophisticated shepherd you are, Johnson! Why, applause from the house when you first come on So he has gone on night after night, never getting a hand and you getting a couple of rounds at least, and sometimes three, till at length he got quite desperate, and had half a mind last night to play Tj balt with a real sword and pink you—not dangerously, but just enough to lay you up for a month or two

NICHOLAS Very considerate

FOLAIR Yes, I think it was, under the circumstances, his professional reputation being at stake. But his heart failed him, and he cast about for some other way to annoy you, and making himself popular at the same time—for that s the point

NICHOLAS Oh, that 's the point, is it?

FOLAIR Yes, notoriety, notoriety is the thing Bless you, if he had pinked you, it would have been worth—ah, it would have been worth eight or ten shillings a week to him

NICHOLAS Eight or ten shillings a week How?

FOLAIR Undoubtedly All the town would have come to see the actor who nearly killed a man by mistake.

I shouldn't wonder if it had got him an engagement in London. However, he was obliged to try some other method of getting popular, and this one occurred to him.

NICHOLAS. But I don't see how this is going to benefit him.

FOLAIR. It's a clever idea, really. If you had shown the white feather, and let him pull your nose, he'd have got it into the paper; if you had sworn the peace against him, it would have been in the paper, too, and he'd have been just as much talked about as you, don't you see?

NICHOLAS. Oh, certainly; but suppose I were to turn the tables, and pull his nose, what then? Would that make his fortune?

FOLAIR. Why, I don't think it would, because there wouldn't be any romance about it, and he wouldn't be favourably known. To tell you the truth, though, he didn't calculate much upon that, for you are so mild spoken, and are so popular among the women, that we didn't suspect you of showing fight. If you did, however, he has a way of getting out of it easily, depend upon that.

NICHOLAS. Has he? We will try to-morrow morning. In the meantime, you can give whatever account of our interview you like best. Good night.

FOLAIR. Is that all you mean to say, Johnson?

NICHOLAS. Yes. Stay! I might add that I strongly suspect that you prompted Mr. Lenville in the course he has taken, and, moreover, you would probably have carried your mission with a high hand, if you had not been disconcerted by my behaviour. However, if you offend again, the penalty may be a broken head. Good night.

FOLAIR. There, that's all right, Johnson, don't alarm yourself. Good night. (*He puts on his muffler and hat, and exit.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

The theatre Portsmouth—next morning Mr LENVILLE surrounded by several gentlemen members of the company
Other members ladies in a group a few paces away Enter FOLAIR *he crosses to LENVILLE*

FOLAIR Lenville you have him! I never saw a man more overcome With fear sir with fear! You are made from this hour—your time is come (*Strikes an attitude*) There is a tide in the affairs of men—Shakespeare!

(*Enter Nicholas*)

NICHOLAS Good morning ladies (*The ladies bow*)

LENVILLE Ha Ha! What puppies there are in the world to be sure!

NICHOLAS Oh! Are you there?

LENVILLE (*Approaching Nicholas*) Slave! (*He stops and hesitates—the ladies all laugh*) Object of my scorn and hatred I hold ye in contempt (*Nicholas and the ladies all laugh*) (*To the ladies*) Minions! (*To Nicholas*) But they shall not protect ye—boy! (*He folds his arms—aside under his breath*) Away with him to the deepest dungeon beneath the castle moat

FIRST MEMBER OF THE COMPANY (*To Second Ditto*) But this is not what we came to see

SECOND DITTO No if there is to be any nose-pulling this morning Lenville had better hurry up

FIRST DITTO If Lenville doesn't mean to do it he had better say so and not keep them waiting

(*Lenville turns up the coat cuff of his right sleeve walks in a stately fashion up to Nicholas who knocks him down* Enter Mrs Lenville, runs and throws herself over Lenville's prostrate body and screams)

LENVILLE (*Sitting up and pointing to Mrs Lenville*) Do you see this monster? Do you see this?

NICHOLAS. Come, apologize for the insolent note you wrote to me last night, and waste no more time in talking.

LENVILLE. Never!

MRS. LENVILLE. Yes, yes, yes! For my sake, for mine, Lenville—forgo all idle forms, unless you would see me a blighted corse at your feet.

LENVILLE. This is affecting! The ties of nature are strong. The weak husband relents. I apologize.

NICHOLAS. Humbly and submissively?

LENVILLE. Humbly and submissively. But only to save her.—A time will come.

NICHOLAS. Very good! When it does come you shall retract if you have the courage. There, be careful, sir, to what lengths your jealousy carries you another time; and be careful, also, before you venture too far, to ascertain your rival's temper. (*Exit.*)

CURTAIN.

BAITING A SCHOOLMASTER

CHARACTERS

MR. CREAKLE, *Principal of 'Salem House' School*

MR. MELL, *Assistant to Mr. Creakle*

TUNGAY, *Mr. Creakle's Factotum*

STEERFORTH, *Senior Boy in the School*

TRADDLES } *Small*

DAVID } *boys*

OTHER BOYS

SCENE

The Schoolroom at Mr. Creakle's school. MR. MELL at his desk is trying to work. The pupils' desks are all awry. One boy is on a form singing; some more are playing 'puss in the corner'. STEERFORTH, lounging with his hands in his pockets, is whistling. TRADDLES is drawing

and exhibiting skeletons DAVID COPPERFIELD *leaves his desk, goes up to MR MELL, places a book by his side, and in dumb show indicates some difficulty* All are talking as if MR. MELL were away

STEERFORTH *(To boys near him)* So old Sharp's gone out as usual to get his hair curled, and left this muff with us Old Creakle don't seem well, either

MELL *(Banging David Copperfield's book on the desk)* Silence! What does this mean? It is impossible to bear it—it's maddening! How can you do it to me, boys?

BOY *(To Traddles, who has just shown a drawing)* It's better than—*(Sudden quiet, the boys all look at Mr Mell save Steerforth, who continues to whistle)*

MELL Silence, Mr Steerforth

STEERFORTH Silence yourself Whom are you talking to?

MELL Sit down

STEERFORTH Sit down yourself, and mind your business. *(Applause and laughter, followed by silence A boy who has darted out to play pretends he wants a pen mended)*

MELL If you think, Steerforth, that I am not acquainted with the power you can establish over any mind here *(he lays his hand on David Copperfield's head)* or that I have not observed you within a few minutes, urging your juniors on to every sort of outrage against me, you are mistaken

STEERFORTH I don't give myself the trouble of thinking at all about you, so I'm not mistaken, as it happens

MELL And when you make use of your position of favouritism here, sir, to insult a gentleman—

STEERFORTH A what? Where is he?

TRADDLES Shame! James Steerforth! Too bad!

MELL Hold your tongue, Traddles *(To Steerforth)* To insult one who is not fortunate in life, and who never gave you the least offence, and the many reasons for not insulting whom you are old enough and wise enough to

understand, you commit a mean and base action. You can sit down or stand up as you please, sir. Copperfield, go on.

STEERFORTH. Young Copperfield, stop a-bit. I tell you what, Mr. Mell, once for all. When you take the liberty of calling me mean and base, or anything of that sort, you are an impudent beggar. You are always a beggar, you know; but when you do that, you are an impudent beggar. (*He stands in front of Mr. Mell, who covers his face with his hands. Enter Mr. Creakle and Tungay, behind the master's chair—sudden rigidity in the scholars—Creakle shakes Mell by the arm.*)

CREAKLE. (*Whispering.*) Mr. Mell, you have not forgotten yourself, I hope?

MELL. No, sir, no. (*Shaking his head and rubbing his hands.*) I have remembered myself, I—no, Mr. Creakle, I have not forgotten myself, I—I have remembered myself, sir. I—I—could wish you had remembered me a little sooner, Mr. Creakle. It—it—would have been more kind, sir, more just, sir. It would have saved me something. (*Creakle sits on the desk, and looks at Mr. Mell.*)

CREAKLE. (*To Steerforth.*) Now, sir, as he don't condescend to tell me, what is this?

STEERFORTH. (*After a pause.*) What did he mean by talking of favourites, then?

CREAKLE. Favourites? Who talked about favourites?

STEERFORTH. He did.

CREAKLE. (*To Mell.*) And pray, what did you mean by that, sir?

MELL. (*In a low voice.*) I meant, Mr. Creakle, as I said, that no pupil had a right to avail himself of his position of favouritism to degrade me.

CREAKLE. To degrade you? My stars! But give me leave to ask you, Mr. What's-your-name, whether, when you talk about favourites, you showed proper respect to

me? To me sir the principal of this establishment, and your employer

MELL It was not judicious sir I am willing to admit I should not have done so if I had been cool

STEERFORTH Then he said I was mean and then he said I was base and then I said he was a beggar If I had been cool perhaps I should not have called him a beggar But I did and I am ready to take the consequences of it

CREAKLE I am surprised Steerforth—although your candour does you honour does *you* honour certainly—I am surprised Steerforth I must say that you should attach such an epithet to any person employed and paid in Salem House sir (*Steerforth laughs*) That is not an answer sir to my remark I expect more than that from you Steerforth

STEERFORTH Let him deny it

CREAKLE Deny that he is a beggar Steerforth? Why, where does he go a begging?

STEERFORTH If he is not a beggar himself his near relations one it is all the same Since you expect me Mr Creakle to justify myself and to say what I mean—what I have to say is that his mother lives on charity in an alms-house

MELL (*Aside*) Yes I thought so!

CREAKLE Now you hear what this gentleman says Mr Mell Have the goodness to set him right before the assembled school

MELL He is right sir without correction.

CREAKLE Be so good then as declare publicly will you whether it ever came to my knowledge until this moment

MELL I believe not directly

CREAKLE Why you know not don't you man?

MELL I apprehend you never supposed my worldly circumstances to be very good, you know what my position is and always has been here.

CREAKLE. I apprehend, if you come to that, that you've been in a wrong position, altogether, and mistook this for a charity school. Mr. Mell, we'll part, if you please. The sooner, the better.

MELL. (*Rising.*) There is no time like the present.

CREAKLE. Sir, to you!

MELL. I take my leave of you, Mr. Creakle, and all of you. James Steerforth, the best wish I can leave you is that you may come to be ashamed of what you have done to-day. At present, I would prefer to see you anything rather than a friend to me, or any one in whom I feel an interest. (*He takes a few things from his desk, and exit.*)

CREAKLE. (*Tungay repeating in a loud voice what he whispers.*) I thank you, Steerforth—for asserting—though perhaps too warmly—the independence and respectability—of Salem House—than which there is no better—and more highly efficient school—in all London. (*He shakes hands with Steerforth.*) Now boys, three cheers.

ALL. Hip, hip, hurrah!

DAVID. (*Aside.*) I wonder what that is for—for Steerforth, I suppose. (*Traddles bursts out crying.*)

CREAKLE. Come here, sir! (*He canes Traddles, who goes back and draws skeletons. Exeunt Creakle and Tungay.*)

STEERFORTH. I am glad, Traddles, you caught it.

TRADDLES. I don't care! Mr. Mell has been ill-used.

STEERFORTH. Who has ill-used him, you girl?

TRADDLES. Why, you have.

STEERFORTH. What have I done?

TRADDLES. What have you done? Hurt his feelings and lost him his situation.

STEERFORTH. His feelings! His feelings will soon get the better of it, I'll be bound. His feelings are not like yours, Miss Traddles. As to his situation, which was a precious one, wasn't it?—do you suppose I'm not going

to write home and take care that he gets some money
Polly?

CHORUS OF BOYS Jolly good of you! How splendid!
Good old Steerforth

STEERFORTH I have done this expressly for you all and
I think I've conferred a great boon on you all by being
unselfish enough to do it

CURTAIN

MISS PINKERTON'S ACADEMY

CHARACTERS

MISS PINKERTON	<i>Principal of</i>	DANCING MASTER
	<i>the Academy</i>	PHOEBE
MISS JEMIMA PINKERTON	<i>her</i>	SERVANT to <i>Miss P. n</i>
Sister		<i>Academy</i>
AMELIA SEDLEY		MR. SEDLEY
BECKY SHARP		<i>Parents of</i>
MISS SALTIRE		MRS SEDLEY
MISS SWARTZ		<i>Amelia</i>
MISS BRIGGS		JOSEPH SEDLEY
LAURA		<i>Son of Mr and</i>
	<i>Pup Is of</i>	<i>Mrs Sedley</i>
	<i>the Academy</i>	

SCENE I

The Parlour in Miss Pinkerton's Academy MISS PINKERTON
seated at her desk

MISS PINKERTON (*Listening*) Who can that be playing
the piano so meritoriously I wonder? (*Rings bell*)
Surely Herr Soprano cannot be here this is not his day
for—— (*Enter Phoebe*) Phoebe find out who is playing
the piano just now

PHOEBE It's that Miss Sharp Madam She's at it night
and day now

MISS PINKERTON Send her to me at once Phoebe.

PHOEBE Very good madam (*Exit*)

MISS PINKERTON If she plays as well as that I can

dispense with Herr Soprano, at least one day a week, and she can instruct the younger children in his place. 'Twill be a saving, for we don't pay her.'

(Becky Sharp *knocks and enters at once.*)

Is this the way you enter this room, without waiting to be bidden?

BECKY. I was told you wanted me at once.

MISS PINKERTON. But this is my private room, miss. However, I have decided to dispense with Herr Soprano's services for the juniors; in future they will be instructed in all that pertains to a knowledge of the piano by you.

BECKY. Oh no! There you are mistaken. I am here to speak French with the children, not to teach them music, and save money for you. Give me money, and I will teach them.

MISS PINKERTON. Do you know to whom you are speaking? For five-and-thirty years I have never seen the individual who has dared in my own house to question my authority. (*Dramatically.*) I have nourished a viper in my bosom!

BECKY. A viper—a fiddlestick! You took me because I was useful. There is no question of gratitude between us. I hate this place, and want to leave it. I will do nothing here but what I am obliged to do.

MISS PINKERTON. Are you aware that you are speaking to Miss Pinkerton?

BECKY. (*Laughing.*) Ha, ha, ha! Give me a sum of money and get rid of me. I know you would have sent me away long ago, but for the forfeit—or, if you like better, get me a good place as governess in a nobleman's family—you can do so if you please.

MISS PINKERTON. (*Aside.*) It so happens that Sir Pitt Crawley has applied to me for a governess just now. I had

better let her go (*Aloud*) I can do as you wish I cannot find fault with your conduct, except to myself, and I must allow that your talents and accomplishments are of a high order As far as the head goes, at least, you do credit to the educational system pursued at my establishment

BECKY Very well madam cancel my indentures for the remaining years and let me go

(*A knock at the door*)

MISS PINKERTON Enter! (*Enter Amelia Sedley*) It is you Amelia What request have you to prefer to me?

AMELIA (*Curtseying*) I came to inquire whether you would consider favourably a request that Miss Sharp might go home with me

MISS PINKERTON (*Aside*) This is the only point in Amelia's behaviour which has not been satisfactory to her mistress. (*Aloud*) It is unaccountable Amelia your liking for Miss Sharp but, in the present conditions, I can refuse you nothing reasonable she may go

BECKY Je vous remercie mademoiselle mille fois Adieu (*Exeunt Becky and Amelia*)

SCENE II

The same An hour or two later Bell rings outside Enter Miss JEMIMA PINKERTON

JEMIMA It is Mrs Sedley's coach sister Sambo the black servant has just rung the bell and the coachman has a new red waistcoat

MISS PINKERTON Have you completed all the necessary preparations incident to Miss Sedley's departure, Miss Jemima?

JEMIMA The girls were up at four this morning packing her trunks, sister We have made her a bow pot

MISS PINKERTON. Say a bouquet, sister Jemima—'tis more genteel.

JEMIMA. Well, a booky, as big almost as a haystack. I have put up two bottles of the gilly-flower water for Mrs. Sedley, and the recipe for making it, in Amelia's box.

MISS PINKERTON. And I trust, Miss Jemima, you have made a copy of Miss Sedley's account?

JEMIMA. It's to your left, sister, on the table.

MISS PINKERTON. (*Taking up a paper.*) This is it, is it? Very good. (*Opens it and reads.*) Ninety-three pounds four shillings. Be kind enough to address it to John Sedley, Esquire, and to seal this billet which I have written to his lady.

JEMIMA. Is it your usual letter, madam?

MISS PINKERTON. You know, Miss Jemima, that it is my invariable custom to indite an epistle to the respected parents—or in the case of a wealthy and well-connected orphan, to the guardians—when each pupil's sojourn in this humble abode concludes; to what end, then, that unnecessary question?

JEMIMA. I wished only to be sure, madam, that——

MISS PINKERTON. Since you have been so officious, you will now, I beg, read it once more to me, that I may judge whether it is worthy of a humble friend of the great Lexicographer.

JEMIMA. (*Opening the letter and reading.*) The Mall, Chiswick, June 15, 1813. Madam, After her six years' residence at the Mall, I have the honour and happiness of presenting Miss Amelia Sedley to her parents, as a young lady not unworthy to occupy a fitting position in their polished and refined circle. . . . In music, in dancing, in orthography, in every variety of embroidery and needlework, she will be found to have realized her friends' fondest wishes. In geography there is still much to be desired;